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THE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. JOHN HOWE, M.A.

AS PUBLISHED DURING HIS LIFE

COMPRISING

THE WHOLE OF THE TWO FOLIO VOLUMES,

EDIT. 1724.

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THE

REV. J. P. HEWLETT,

AND A PORTRAIT, FROM AN ORIGINAL PAINTING BY SIR. P. LELY

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

Soli Deo Gloria Publications
"...for instruction in righteousness..."

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A DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

THE REDEEMER'S DOMINION

OVER

THE INVISIBLE WORLD,

AND

THE ENTRANCE THEREINTO BY DEATH.

SOME PART WHEREOF WAS PREACHED ON OCCASION OF

THE DEATH OF JOHN HOGHTON, Esq.

ELDEST SON OF SIR CHARLES HOGHTON, OF HOGHTON TOWER, IN THE COUNTY OF LANCASTER, BARONET.

TO THE

MOST DESERVEDLY HONOURED

AND

TRULY HONOURABLE

SIR CHARLES AND THE LADY MARY HOGHTON,

OF HOGHTON TOWER.

Grace, mercy, and peace, &c.

You will, I know, count it no indecency, that, when God hath so nearly, many years ago, joined you in relation, in affection, and now so lately, in the affliction equally common to you both, I do also join your names on the same paper, and make this solemn address to you together.

It is by the inestimable favour of Heaven, that the mutual interest God hath given you in each other, as it obligeth, doth also (as I have great reason to hope) effectually dispose and enable you, not only to partake in the comforts, but in the sorrows, that are common to you both, so as that the former shall be greatly increased, and the latter proportionably allayed and mitigated thereby. Thus is the advantage of your conjugal state both *represented* in God's designation, and *apprehended* in your own experience.

And you are to consider the blessing of God herein as having a peculiarity in it, not being extended to all so related, neither to all that were great in this world, nor to all that were pious and good. Great worldly felicity hath been rendered insipid and spiritless, great calamities much the more bitter, by the want of a meet mutual helpfulness between such relations.

A great and a good man (Job i. 1) in his time; a prince, as he is thought to have been, in his country; "a man that was perfect, and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil;" when he lost not *one*, not the *eldest*, only, of his numerous offspring, (as you have,) but, all at once, seven sons and three daughters, with such concomitant circumstances of accumulated afflictions, as, blessed be God, are not in your case; and might now expect some relief from his other self, the nearest and most inward companion of his life, and partaker of his joys and sorrows; all the succour he had from her, was an impious endeavour to provoke and irritate his spirit; that taunting scoff, "Dost thou still retain thy integrity?" and that horrid advice, "Curse God, and die." Whereas, that rational, religious, soul-composing thought, "Shall we receive good things at the hand of God, and not

also evil things ?" was deeply fixed in the mind of the one, how much more effectually relieving had it been, if it had circulated between both the relatives; and they had alternately propounded and enlarged upon it to one another !

With you, I cannot doubt, it hath been so; and that you have made it your business to improve your mutual interest, not to aggravate, but to alleviate your affliction each to other.

You have, both of you, great occasion and obligation to revolve and recount to each other the many good things you have received at the hand of God, to mitigate what there is of evil in this dispensation.

Both of you have sprung of religious and honourable families, favoured of God, valued and beloved in the countries where he had planted them. They have been, both, seats of religion, and of the worship of God; the resorts of his servants; houses of mercy to the indigent, of justice to the vicious, of patronage to the sober and virtuous, and of good example to all about them.

You were both dedicated to God early, and he gave early testimony of his accepting the dedication. He began with you both betimes, blessing your education, and owning you for his, by disposing and forming your spirits to own betimes the God of your fathers. He hath blessed you indeed, adding the spiritual blessings in heavenly things, to your many earthly comforts. This, Jabez might mean, not content with a common blessing; and the more probably, from the acceptance he found. 1 Chron. iv. 9, 10. God granted his request, as Solomon's, when his request was as little vulgar. 1 Kings iii. 10.

You both concurred in the dedication of *this* your son, as in the rest of yours; and I doubt not with great seriousness you covenanted with God in Christ, to be his God. And if he enabled you to be in good earnest herein, even that was of special grace and favour, and ought to come into the account of the many good things you have received of God's hand; as offering to God willingly, did in the estimate of David, when the oblation was of a meaner kind. 1 Chron. xxix. 14.

But, then, you ought to consider what the import and meaning was of that your covenant, wherein you accepted God in Christ to be the God of your son; and dedicated him to God through Christ to be his. Was it not absolute, and without limitation, that God should be a God to him entirely and without reserve, and that he should be his absolutely, and be disposed of by him at his pleasure? Otherwise, there was a repugnancy and contradiction in the very terms of your covenant. To be a God to him ! Is not *God*, the name of a Being incapable of limitation ? Doth it not signify infinite, unlimited power and goodness ? To be a God to any one, therefore, under restriction, is to be *a God* to him, and *no* God. And so to covenant with God can neither have sincerity in it, nor good sense. He can be under no restraint in the exercises of his power and goodness towards any to whom he vouchsafes to be their God in covenant, but what he is pleased to lay upon himself; which must be from his own wisdom and good pleasure, to which in covenanting we refer ourselves; with *particular*

faith—in reference to what he hath expressly promised ; and with *general*—that all shall be well, where his promise is not express. But from ourselves, nothing can be prescribed to him. He must be our all, or nothing ; in point of enjoyment, as our sovereign, all-comprehending good ; in point of government, as our sovereign, all-disposing Lord. So we take him, in covenanting with him for ourselves and ours : for hé so propounds and offers himself to us. If we accept and take him accordingly, there is a covenant between him and us ; otherwise we refuse him, and there is no covenant. When he promises, as to his part, he promises his all ; to be God all-sufficient to us ; to be ours in all his fulness, according to our measure and capacity : we are not straitened in him, but in ourselves. He undertakes to be to us, and do for us, all that it belongs to him, as a God, to be and do : to give us grace and glory, (Ps. lxxxiv. 11,) about which, there can be no dispute or doubt ; they are always and immutably good : and to withhold from us no good thing ; here, are comprehended, with the former, inferior good things, about which, because they are but mutably, and not always good, there may be a doubt, whether now and in present circumstances, they will be good for us, or no. And now it belongs to him, as he is to do the part of a God to us, to judge and determine for us, (for which he alone is competent, as being God only wise, and otherwise he were not God all-sufficient,) and not to leave that to us, who are so apt to be partial and mistaken in our judgment.

But when he makes his demand from us, of what we on our part are to be, and do, he demands our all, absolutely ; that we surrender ourselves and ours, whatsoever we are and have, to his pleasure and disposal, without other exception or restriction than by his promise he hath laid upon himself.

Nor are we to think it strange there should be this difference, in the tenor of his covenant, between his part and ours. For we are to remember, the covenant between him and us is not as of equals. He covenants as God ; we, as creatures : he, according to the universal, infinite perfection, and all-sufficiency of a God ; we, according to the insufficiency, imperfection, and indigency of creatures.

These things were, I doubt not, all foreknown, and I hope considered, by you, when you so solemnly transacted with God, concerning this your son ; wherein you could not but then take him for your God, as well as his God. It needs now only to be applied to the present case ; and it manifestly admits this application, *viz.* That this his disposal of him, in taking him now up to himself, to be glorified by him, and to glorify him in the heavenly state, was a thing then agreed upon by solemn covenant, between God and you. It was done by your own virtual and unretracted consent. The substance of the thing was agreed to expressly ; that God should be his God, and finally make him happy and blessed in himself. But if you say you would only have had his complete blessedness yet a while deferred ; I will only say, Could you agree with that God whose he was, and whose you are, about the substance of so great a transaction ; and now differ with him about a circumstance ? And besides, all circumstances must

be comprehended in your agreement. For, taking him to be your God, you take him to be supreme Disposer in all things, and his will to be in everything the rule and measure of yours ; which you have expressly consented to as often as you have prayed, either in the words, or after the tenor, of that prayer, wherein our Lord hath taught us to sum up our desire, and represent the sense of our hearts.

But besides the duty that is, both by his law, and by covenant-agreement, owing to God, it is also to be considered as a high dignity put upon you, to be the covenanted parents of a glorified son ; a matter of greater boast, than if you could say, "Our son (to repeat what I formerly wrote) is one of the greatest princes on earth !"

How far should paganism be outdone by Christianity, which exhibits to our view death abolished, life and immortality brought to light, by Jesus Christ, in the gospel, (2 Tim. i. 10 ;) which sets before us all the glories of the other world in a bright representation ! Which if we believe, that faith will be to us the substance of what we hope for, and the evidence of what we see not. Thus, though you saw not the kind reception and abundant entrance of this son of your delights into the everlasting kingdom, it will yet be a thing evident to you, and your faith will render it a great and most substantial reality. Pagans had but obscure glimmerings of such things ; and in such afflicting cases, when they have occurred, comparatively lank and slender supports, yet such as were not to be despised.

Should I transcribe what I find written in way of consolation, by Plutarch to Apollonius, upon the loss of a son, you would see what would give both instruction and admiration. I shall mention some passages. He praises the young person deceased, for his comeliness, sobriety, piety, dutifulness towards parents, and obligingness towards friends ; acknowledges that sorrow, in the case of losing such a son, hath (φυσικὴν ἀρχὴν) "a principle in nature," and is of the things that are (οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν) "not in our power," or which we cannot help ; that to be destitute of it is neither possible nor fit ; that an apathy, or insensibleness, in such a case, is no more desirable than that we should endure to have a limb, a part of ourselves, cut or torn off from us, without feeling it. But yet he affirms, that immoderate sorrow, upon such an occasion, is (παρὰ φύσιν) "preternatural," and hath a pravity in it, and proceeds from a misinformed mind ; that we ought in any such case to be neither (ἀπαθεῖς, nor δυσπαθεῖς) "unaffected," nor "ill affected." He tells his friend a story (the meaning whereof is more considerable to us than the credit of it, as perhaps it was to him) concerning two Grecian youths, Cleobis and Biton, whose mother having a duty to perform in the temple of Juno, and the mules not being at hand, at the instant when she expected them to draw her chariot thither, they most officiously drew it themselves ; with which act of piety their mother was so transported, that she made her request to Juno, on their behalf, that if there were any thing more desirable unto mortals than another, she would therewith reward her sons ; who, thereupon, threw them into a sleep, out of which they awoke no more : thereby signifying, that death was the best gift that could be bestowed upon persons of such supposed piety as they !

To which purpose, is what he relates concerning the death of Euthynous, an Italian referred to, towards the close of the following discourse, son and heir to the ample estate of Elysius, a person of principal dignity among the Terinæans; to whom, anxiously, inquiring of diviners concerning the cause of this calamity, the spectre of his son, introduced by his father, appeared in his sleep, showing him certain Greek verses, the sum whereof was, Thy inquiry was foolish.

> The minds of men are vain, Euthynous rests by a kindly decreed death,
> Because his living longer had neither been good for him nor his parents.

He afterwards adds, A good man, when he dies, is worthy, not so much of lamentations, as of hymns and praises.

He animadverts upon the aptness of parents to quarrel with any circumstances of a son's death, be they what they will. If he die abroad, then the aggravation is, that neither the father nor the mother had opportunity to close his eyes; if at home, then, How is he plucked away, even out of our hands!

He gives divers memorable instances of sundry great persons, bearing, with strange composure of mind, the same kind of affliction. I omit what he wrote to his wife on their loss of a child: as also to recite many very instructive passages out of Seneca writing to Marcia, on the same account, *viz.* by way of consolation for her loss of a son; and to Helvia, for her loss in the same kind; to Polybius, having lost a near relation, &c.

But we have the oracles of God, and do, too commonly, less need to receive instruction from heathens, than deserve to be reproached by them, that there is so frequent cause for the complaint of that ancient worthy (Hieron.) in the Christian church; *Non præstat fides quod præstitit infidelitas*, "The infidelity of pagans performs greater things than the faith of Christians." Their sedate temper, their mastery over turbulent passions, may in many instances shame our impotency and want of self-government, in like cases.

For who of them have ever had, or could have, so great a thing to say, as is said to us by the word of the Lord, for this very purpose, "that we may not sorrow concerning them that are asleep, even as others who have no hope: for if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say to you," (and it is said by the forementioned authority; the Lord himself having revealed it to this great apostle, and directed him to say it,) "that we who are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up, together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thess. iv. 13—18.

I have transcribed these few verses that they might readily appear to present view. And because all their efficacy, and all our advantage

by them, depend upon our believing them, let us closely put the question to ourselves, Do we believe them, or do we not? The apostle seems to design the putting us upon this self-reflection, by inserting the supposition, "If we believe;" *q.d.* This will effectually do the business of allaying all our hopeless sorrow. For if we believe that one fundamental truth, (and therefore let us see whether we do or no,) of Christ's dying and rising again, it will draw such a train of consequences, all tending to fill our souls with a vital joy, as will leave no place for undue sorrow any longer. That faith will be still urging and carrying us forward, will make us wholly intent upon prospect and expectation. What are we now to look for upon such a foundation, so firmly laid, and fully believed? If we believe that Jesus died! He did not submit to die without a design; and his rising again, speaks him Master of his design; and that he hath it now entirely in his power. He died, not for himself, but for them he was to redeem! And being now risen again, what must become of them! All that follows, is now matter of glorious triumph!

If Plato, Plutarch, or Seneca had but once had such a revelation from heaven as this, and that ground to believe it that we have, how full would their writings have been of it! How had they abounded in lofty paraphrases upon every period and word of it!

The faith of such things would surely make a truly Christian heart so earnestly press forward in the expectation of the great things still to ensue, as to leave it little leisure for retrospection. And this is the source of all our intemperate sorrow, in such a case as this—our framing to ourselves pleasing suppositions of being as we were, with such and such friends and relatives about us as we heretofore enjoyed. As hope of what is future and desirable feeds our joy, so memory of good things past doth our sorrow. In such a case as this, which the apostle here speaks to, the decease of our dear friends and relatives fallen asleep, we are apt to look back with a lingering eye upon the former state of things, and to say, as he, *O mihi præteritos*, "O that God would recall for me the years that are gone over!" Or, as in sacred language, "O that I were as in months past—when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me; when my children were about me!" Job. xxix. 1—5.

What pleasant scenes do we form to ourselves afresh, of past things, on purpose to foment present sorrow! And whether we have that design or no, we are more prone to look back to former things which we have known, than forward to future which we know not; especially, if the further we look back, the less we find of trouble intermingled in our former course. A smooth and pleasant path we would go over again, if reason and the necessity of affairs do not recall us, and urge us forward.

And so, sir, might you find matter for a very copious and not ungrateful recollection, to call over again, and revolve in your thoughts the pleasures of your youth, (more innocent than of many others,) when you were encumbered with no cares, entertained with various delights of one sort and another, in this or that pleasant seat of your parents. But how remote is it from you, upon consideration, to wish

yourself back into your juvenile state and circumstances ! How much more generous and Godlike a pleasure is it to be doing good in the world, and still to abound therein ; to go forward, and do still more and more !

And, madam, who could have a more pleasant retrospect upon former days than you, recounting your Antrim delights, the delight you took in your excellent relations, your garden-delights, your closet-delights, your Lord's days' delights ! But how a much greater thing is it to serve God in your present station ; as the mother of a numerous and hopeful offspring ; as the mistress of a large family ; where you bear your part, with your like-minded consort, in supporting the interest of God and religion, and have opportunity of scattering blessings round about you !

But our business is not recurring or looking back. God is continually calling us forward. Time is a stream running on towards the vast ocean. Tending backward, is vain striving against the stream. And as it is the course and method of nature, of providence, and grace, to tend forward, and carry us from less to greater things in this world ; so do all these conspire to carry us on (because our ἀκμὴ, " our highest pitch," cannot be here) to yet far greater things in the greater world. Of which vast world, it is the design of the following discourse to give you some account ; though, God knows, it is but a very imperfect one. Such as it is, if God only make it an occasion to you of fixing your minds and hearts upon that mighty theme, you will find it easy and pleasant to you to amplify upon it and enlarge it to yourselves : and thereby, through God's blessing, I doubt not, arrive to a fulness of satisfaction concerning this late dispensation, which hath a gloominess upon it, but is in very deed only gloomy on one side, *viz.* downwards, and towards this wretched world, this region of sorrow and darkness : but on the side upwards, and towards that other world which casts its lustre upon it, its phasis and appearance will be altogether bright and glorious. And the more you look by a believing intuition into that other world where our blessed Redeemer and Lord bears rule in so transcendent glory, the more will you be above all the cloudy darkness of this event of Providence towards yourselves and your family. Herein, your perusal of this very defective essay may be of some use to you. And I reckoned it might be of more lasting and permanent use to you, and yours after you, and to as many others into whose hands it might fall, as a little book, than as one single sermon.

You will, however, I doubt not, apprehend in it the sincere desire to assist you in this your present difficult trial ; followed by the faithful endeavour of,

Most honoured in the Lord,

Your very respectful and obliged servant,

In him, and for his sake,

JOHN HOWE.

May 17, 1699.

THE

REDEEMER'S DOMINION,

ETC.

REV. i. 18.

"*And have the keys of hell* (hades, or the unseen world) *and of death.*"

THE peculiar occasion of this present solemnity, (I mean, that is additional to the usual business of the Lord's day,) may be somewhat amusing to narrower and less considering minds; *i. e.* That I am now to take notice to you of (what the most would call) the premature or untimely death of a most hopeful young gentleman, the heir of a very considerable family, greatly prepared by parts and pious sentiments, and further preparing, by study and conversation, to be useful to the age, cut off in his prime, when the mere showing him * to the world had begun to raise an expectation in such as knew him, of somewhat more than ordinary hereafter from him, his future advantageous circumstances being considered; of which you will hear further towards the close of this discourse.

Nor did I know any passage in the whole sacred volume, more apt to serve the best and most valuable purpose in such a case, than the words now read; none more fitted to enlarge our minds, to compose them, and reduce to a due temper even theirs who are most concerned, and most liable to be disturbed; or to instruct us all how to interpret and comment aright upon so perplexing and so intricate a Providence as this, at the first and slighter view, may seem unto us.

In order whereto, our business must be to explain and apply this most weighty and awful saying.

First. For the *explication*, these three things are to be inquired into.

* Ostendunt terris hunc tantum fata nec ultra esse sinunt.—*Virgil.*

I. Who it is that claims and asserts to himself this power here spoken of.

II. What it is about which this claimed power is to be conversant.

III. What sort of power it is that this emblematical expression signifies to belong to him.

I. Who it is that claims the power here spoken of; where the inquiry is not so much concerning the person that makes this claim, which all the foregoing context puts out of question to be our Lord Christ; but touching the special notion and capacity wherein he claims it, and according whereto it must be understood to belong to him.

And whereas he is described by very distinct titles and attributes, promiscuously interwoven in the preceding verses of the chapter, *viz.* that sometimes he is introduced speaking in the style of a God; (as *v.* 8, "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." And again, *v.* 11, "I am Alpha and Omega;") but that sometimes he is represented in the form of a man, and accordingly described even from head to foot, and said to appear, in the vision that exhibits him, as one like unto the Son of Man, that we might certainly understand him so to be, (*v.* 13—16,) and such things said of him as are incident to a mortal man; the shedding of his blood, (*v.* 5,) and that he was dead, (*v.* 18, *former part:*) yea, and expressions of this different import intermingled, that we might know it was the same Person who was continually spoken of under these so vastly different characters; as, "I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead." *v.* 17, 18. We may, thereupon, very reasonably conclude that he is not here to be conceived under the one notion or the other, neither as God nor as man, separately or exclusively of each other; but as both together, as Θεάνθρωπος, as *God-man,* under which conjunct notion he receives and sustains the office of our Redeemer, and Mediator between God and man: which will enable us the more clearly to answer the third inquiry, when we come to it, concerning the kind of that power which is here claimed; and which, because there can be no doubt of the justice of his claim, we are hereby taught to ascribe to him: for the management whereof, we are also hence to reckon him every way competent; that he was *par negotio,* that it was not too big for him; no expressions being used to signify his true humanity, but which are joined with others, as appropriate to deity: and that nothing, therefore, obliges us to narrow it more than the following account imports, which we are next to inquire about; *viz.*—

II. The large extent of the object about which the power he here claims is to be conversant; *i. e.* (as we read, *hell*—but

which is truly to be read) *hades* (the unseen world) and death.

The former of these, we, with a debasing limitation, and, as I doubt not will appear, very unreasonably, do render *hell.*

The power belonging to Christ, we are elsewhere taught to conceive, is of unspeakably greater latitude. And here we are not taught to confine it to so vile and narrow limits, as this translation gives it. All things in the context conspire to magnify him, and, agreeably hereto, to magnify his dominion. When, therefore, the apparent design is to speak him *great,* that he should only be represented as the Jailor of devils and their companions, is, to me, unaccountable; unless a very manifest necessity did induce to it.

From the word ᾅδης, there can be no pretence for it. Though it ought to be extended, it is by no means to be restrained to that sense: which as it is the most ignoble, so it will appear but a very small, minute, part of its signification; whether we consider the literal import, or the common use, of the word.

Literally, it signifies but what we see not, or what is out of our sight. But as the word of which it is compounded signifies also to know, as well as to see, it may further signify that state of things which lies without the compass of our knowledge, even out of the reach of our mental sight: or concerning which, though we are to believe what is revealed, we cannot immediately or distinctly know it; and in reference whereto, therefore, we are to walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Cor. v. 7.

And the common use of the word has been very agreeable hereto, with writers of all sorts; *i. e.* to signify indefinitely the unseen world; or the state of the deceased out of our world, who are, consequently, gone out of our sight, whether they were good or bad; so as not peculiarly to signify hell, or any place or state of torment, only.

It were easy to abound in quotations to this purpose, if it were either needful or proper in a discourse of this nature.

What I intend in this kind, I shall only set down on the bye in the margin, upon which they that will may cast their eye; *

* And here it may suffice to take notice that Greek writers, poets, philosophers, historians, and other writers, that have made only occasional mention of this word ᾅδης, or of the words next akin to it, ἄϊς, or ἀΐδης, or lexicographers, that have purposely given an account of it, from Greek authors, that must be supposed best to understand the use of words in their own tongue; generally such as have not been engaged in a controversy, that obliges men usually to torture words to their own sense, or to serve the hypothesis which they had espoused; have been remote from confining this, or the cognate words, to that narrow sense as only to signify a place or state of torment for bad men, but understood it as comprehending, also, a state of felicity for the pious and good.

For such as have been concerned in interpreting this or other like words with

that the discourse be not interrupted as to others, that either have no need to be informed in this matter, having known as much before as can be now told them; or no inclination

reference to the known and famous controversy, which I need not mention, their judgments must weigh according to the reputation they are of with the reader.

The Greeks, no doubt, best understood their own language. And among them can we think that Homer in the beginning of his first *Iliad*, when he speaks of the many brave souls of his heroes, those ἴφθιμοι ψυχαὶ, which the war he is describing sent into the invisible regions, ἄϊδι προΐαψεν, that he ever dreamt they were all promiscuously dispatched away to a place of torment? Not to mention other passages where he uses the word ἄδης to the same purpose. Divers others of the Greek poets are cited by several ready to our hands, with which I shall not cumber these pages. That one is enough, and nothing can be fuller to our purpose, which is quoted by Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata*, lib. v. as well as by sundry others, and ascribed to the comic Diphilus, (though by others to another, Philemon.)

Καὶ γὰρ καθ' ᾅδην δύο τρίβους νομίζομεν
Μίαν δικαίων, χάτέραν ἀσεβῶν ὁδόν.

In hades we reckon there are two paths, the one of the righteous, the other of the wicked; plainly showing that *hades* was understood to contain heaven and hell. Plato, when in his *Phædo* he tells us that he that comes into *hades*, ἀμύητος, καὶ ἀτέλεστος, "not initiated and duly prepared," is thrown into Βόρβορος, "a stinking lake," but he that comes into it fitly purified, shall dwell with the gods, as expressly signifies *hades* to include the same opposite states of misery and felicity. In that dialogue called *Axiochus*, though supposed not to be his, written by one that sufficiently knew the meaning of such a word, we are told that when men die, they are brought into the Πεδίον ἀληθείας, "the field of truth," where sit judges that examine τίνα βίον, what manner of life every one lived while he dwelt in the body, that they who, while they lived here, were inspired by a good genius or spirit, go into the region of pious men, having, before they came into *hades* been purified: such as led their lives wickedly, are hurried by furies up and down chaos, in the region of the wicked. In the third Book *De Republica*, Plato blames the poets that they represent the state of things in *hades* too frightfully, when they should μᾶλλον ἐπαινεῖν, praise it rather. *Plutarch, de Superstitione*, brings in Plato speaking of *hades*, as a person, or a god, *Dis* or *Pluto*, as they frequently do, and says he is φιλάνθρωπος, "benign or friendly to men;" therefore not a tormentor of them only. *Cælius Rhodigin* quotes this same passage of Plutarch, and takes notice that our Saviour speaks of the state of torment by another word, not *hades*, but *Gehenna;* which sufficiently shows how he understood it himself.

And whereas there are who disagree to this notation of this word, that makes it signify *unseen*, as some will fetch it from the Hebrew, and go as far back as Adam in their search, alleging for this the authority of an old Sibyl, will have it go for ἀηδὴς, and signify as ἀτερπὴς, *unpleasant;* nothing is plainer than that this other is the common notion, which (though fancy hath not a greater dominion in any thing than in etymology) would make one shy of stretching invention to find how to differ from the generality. Therefore Calepin, upon this word, tells us that the Greek grammarians do, against the nature of the *etymon*, (which plainly enough shows what they understood that to be,) generally direct its beginning to be written with the *asper spirit*, but yet he makes it signify *obscure*, or *not visible*. And though Plato is endeavoured to be hooked into the deriving it from Adam by a very far fetch; yet it is plain that his calling it τόπον ἄδηλον, in a place before referred to, shows he understood it to signify *invisible:* and so lexicons will commonly derive it, *(Vulgo*, says *Cælius Rhodig.)* But its extnesiveness, as comprehending a state of happiness, is our principal concern, which way (as we might show by many more instances) the common stream carries it. Pausanias, in his ΑΡΚΑΔΙΚΑ', speaking of Hermes (according to Homer) as Διὸς διάκονον, and that he did lead souls ὑπὸ τὸν ᾅδην, could not be thought to mean they were then universally miserable. Sextus Empiricus is an authority good enough for the meaning of a Greek word; when (Adversus Mathem.) he tells us, though by way of objection, all men have a common notion περὶ τῶν ἐν ᾅδου, (using the genitive with ἐν, as Homer and others do, another word, house or abode, in the dative, being

to be diverted from their present purpose in reading; apprehending that what is generally told them, only concerning the usual signification of a word, is not said without some ground. And let texts of Scripture be consulted about that, how *hades*, and the correspondent word *sheol*, in the Old Testament, are used there. If we take the help of interpreters, the impartial reader is to judge of their fidelity and ability who go our way.*

Upon the whole, it being most evident that hell is but a small and mean part of what is signified by *hades*, it will be very unreasonable to represent or conceive of the power here ascribed to our Lord, according to that narrow notion of it: and would be a like incongruity, as if, to magnify the person of highest dignity in the court of a mighty prince, one should say, "He is the keeper of the dungeon."

The word itself, indeed, properly taken, and according to its just extent, mightily greatens him, *i.e.* it is as much as to say, His dominion is of unknown limits; such as no eye can measure. We think with a sort of veneration, of what is represented as too big for our knowledge. We have a natural awe and reverence for unsearchable darkness. But in the meantime we herein suffer a just diminution of ourselves, that when our inquiry stops, and can proceed no further, it being but a

understood,) and yet, as to the thing, he afterwards distinguishes poets' fables, and what, from the nature of the soul itself, all have a common apprehension of. As also Diog. Laërt. has the same phrase, mentioning the writings of Protagoras, who, he says, wrote one book περὶ τῶν ἐν ᾅδου, using the genitive, as here, after ἐν, as hath been usual, on the mentioned account. And though his books were burnt by the Athenians, because of the dubious title of one of them concerning the gods, so that we have not opportunity to know what his opinion of *hades* was, we have reason, more than enough, to think he understood it not of a state of torment only for evil spirits.

* Primate Usher's judgment may be seen in his answer to the Jesuits' challenge, that this word properly signifies the other world, the place or state of the dead—so that heaven itself may be comprehended in it. Grotius, on Luke xvi. 23, makes *hades* most certainly to signify a place withdrawn from our sight; spoken of the body, the grave; of the soul, all that region wherein it is separate from the body. So that as Dives was in *hades*, so was Lazarus too, but in separate regions: for both paradise and hell, or, as the Grecians were wont to speak, *Elysii*, and *Tartara*, were in *hades*. You may have in him more quotations from the poets, the sense of the Essenes from Josephus, and passages from divers of the fathers to the same purpose. Dr. Hammond's mind was the same, copiously expressed on Matt. xi. 23; but differs from Grotius, in ascribing to Philemon the iambics above recited, which the other gives to Diphilus. Dr. Lightfoot is full to the same purpose, on the 4th Article of the Creed. And though Bellarmin will have this word always signify *hell*, (which if it do, with *sheol* the correspondent word, Jacob desired to go to hell to his son, as Dr. Hammond argues;) Camero as good a judge, thinks, except once, it never does. If any desire to see more to this purpose with little trouble to themselves, let them peruse Martinius's lexicon on the word *inferus* or *infernus*. I could refer to many more whom I forbear to mention.

Only if any think in some or other text of Scripture this word must signify *hell* only, since it is of that latitude as to signify *heaven* in other places, an impartial view of the circumstances of the text must determine whether there it be meant of the one, or the other, or both.

very little part of the universe that lies within our compass, having tired our inquiring eye and mind, upon all the rest we write, *hades;* call it *unseen,* or *unknown.* And because we call it so, God himself, in reference to us, calls it so too; it being his way, (as is observed by that noted Jew, Maimonides,) speaking to men, to use the tongue of the children of men, to speak to them in their own language, and allow them to coin their own words: which at first they often do very occasionally; nor, as to this, could they have a fairer or a more urgent occasion, or that is more self-justifying, than in one word to say of that other world, that it is *hades,* or *invisible,* when that is truly all that they have to say, or can have any immediate notice of, about it.

It hath therefore its rise from ourselves, and the penury of our knowledge of things; and is at once both an ingenuous confession, with some sort of modest cover and excuse of our own ignorance: as with geographers, all that part of this globe which they cannot describe, is *terra incognita;* and with philosophers, such phenomena in nature as they can give no account of they resolve shortly, and in the most compendious way, into some or other occult quality, or somewhat else as occult.

How happy were it, if in all matters that concern religion, and in this, as it doth so, they would shut up in a sacred, venerable darkness, what they cannot distinctly perceive, it being once by the undeceiving word expressly asserted, that it is; without therefore denying its reality, because they clearly apprehend not what it is.

With too many their religion is so little, and their pride and self-conceit so great, that they think themselves fit to be standards; that their eye or mind is of a size large enough to measure the creation, yea, and the Creator too. And by how much they have the less left them of mind, or the more it is sunk into earth and carnality, the more capable it is of being the measure of all reality, of taking the compass of all being, created and uncreated. And so that of the philosopher takes place in the worst sense that can be put upon it,—"to see darkness is to see nothing." All is nullity that their sense reaches not. *Hades* is with such, indeed, empty, imaginary darkness; or in plainer English, there is neither heaven nor hell, because they see them not.

But we ought to have the greater thoughts of it, not the less, for its being too big, too great, too glorious, for our present view: and that it must as yet rest, as to us, and so let it rest a while, under the name of *hades,* the unknown dominion of our great Lord; according to that most express account he at his ascension gave of the existence of both parts together, that less known to

us, and that more known, (Matt. xxviii. 18;) "All power is given unto me, both in heaven and earth."

That death is added, as contained also within the limits of our Lord's dominion, doth expressly signify his custody of the passage from this visible world to the invisible. And as he commands the entrance into each distinct part of *hades*, the *invisible world*, consisting of both heaven and hell, so he hath power over death too, which is the common outlet from this world, and the passage unto both.

But it withal plainly implies his very absolute power over this visible world of ours also: for it signifies he hath the power of measuring every one's time here, and how long each inhabitant of this world shall live in it. If it belong to him to determine when any shall die, it must by consequence belong to him to assign the portion and dimensum of time that every one shall live. Nor is there any conceivable moment in the time of any one's life, wherein he hath not this power of putting a period by death thereunto, at his own pleasure. He is therefore signified to have the power of every man's life and death at once: and the power of life and death is very high and great power. He therefore herein implicitly claims, what is elsewhere expressly ascribed to him, (Rom. xiv. 7—9:) "None liveth to himself, (that is, *de jure*, no man should,) and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and living."

In sum, here is asserted to him a dominion over both worlds; this in which we live, and that into which we die, whether the one or the other part of it. And so in reference to men who once have inhabited this world, the sense of this text, and that we are insisting on, is the same: though *hades* is of vastly larger extent than only to be the receptacle of such as have lived here; it having also, in both the parts of it, innumerable inhabitants who never had a dwelling assigned them in this world of ours at all.

But thus far we have the vast extent of our Lord Christ's dominion competently cleared to be the proper intendment of this text; and that it never meant so faint and minute a representation of it, as only to make him keeper of the bottomless pit; though of that also he hath the key, as we shall further take notice: but we are now to inquire of what will take up less time.

III. The kind of that power over so vast a realm, or manifold realms, signified by this emblematical expression, of *having the keys*, &c.

Every one knows that the keys are insignia, some of the tokens of power; and, according to the peculiarity of the object, may be of divine power.

The Jews, as some writers of their affairs say, appropriate the keys of three, others of four things to God only: of life, or the entrance into this world; of the rain, or the treasures of the clouds; of the earth, say some,* as of the granary of corn; and of the grave; of which says one of their own,† "the Holy, Blessed One hath the keys of the sepulchres in his hand," &c. And as we may be sure he admits thither, so he emits from thence; and, as he says, "In the future age, the Holy, Blessed One will unlock the treasures of souls, and will open the graves, and bring every soul back into its own body," &c.

Nor is this key of the vast *hades*, when it is in the hand of our Redeemer, the less in the hand of the Holy, Blessed One; for so is he too. But it is in his hand as belonging to his office of Mediator between God and man, as was before said. And properly, the phrase signifies ministerial power, being a manifest allusion to the common usage, in the courts of princes, of intrusting to some great minister the power of the keys; as it was foretold of Eliakim, (Isa. xxii.) that he should be placed in the same high station in Hezekiah's court, wherein Shebna was, of whom so severe things are there said; and that the key of the house of David should be laid upon his shoulder, &c. *v.* 20—22. And the house of David being a known type of the house or church of God, and he himself of Christ, who, as the Son, hath power over the whole house, according to this typical way of speaking, our Lord is said (Rev. iii. 7) to have the key of David, to open so as none can shut, to shut so as none can open; *i. e.* to have a final, decisive power in all he doth, from which there is no appeal.

Nor could any thing be more congruous, than that having the keys of the celestial house of God, the heavenly palace of the Great King, the habitation of his holiness and glory, (in which are the everlasting habitations, the many mansions, the places prepared for his redeemed,) he should also have the keys of the terrestrial Bethel; which is but a sort of *portal*, or *vestibulum*, to the other; "the house of God, and the gate of heaven." And as he is implied to have the keys of this introductive, preparatory kingdom of heaven, (as the keys of the king's palace, where is the throne or seat of government, and the keys of the kingdom, must mean the same thing,) when he is said to give them to the apostle Peter, and the other apostles, this was but a prelude, and a minute instance of his power of those keys of *hades*, and of the glorious heavenly kingdom itself contained therein, which he

* Weems. † Pirke R. Eliezer. edit. per G. H. Vorst. C. F.

was not to delegate, but to manage himself immediately in his own person.

If, moreover, he were signified by the angel, (Rev. xx. 1) who was said to have the key of the bottomless pit; that also must import a power, though great in itself, yet very little in comparison of the immense *hades*, of which he is here said to have the keys. So remote is it, that the power ascribed to him *there*, should be the measure of what he here asserts to himself: and the difference must be vastly greater than it is possible for us to conceive, or parallel, by the difference between having power over the palace and all the most delightful and most spacious territories in the vastest empire of the greatest prince, and only having power over a dungeon in some obscure corner of it; which, for the great purposes whereto all this is to be applied, we can scarcely too much inculcate.

Secondly, And to such *application* let us now, with all possible seriousness and intention of spirit, address ourselves; which will consist in sundry inferences or deductions, laying before us some suitable matter, partly of our meditation, partly of our practice: the former whereof are to prepare and lay a ground for the latter.

I. Divers things we may collect, that will be very proper for our deep meditation; which I shall propose not as things that we can be supposed not to have known before, but which are too commonly not enough thought on or considered.

And here we shall somewhat invert the order wherein things lie in the text, beginning with what is there latter and lower, and thence arising, with more advantage, to what is higher and of greater concernment: as,

1. That *men do not die at random*, or by some uncertain, accidental by-stroke, which, as by a slip of the hand, cuts off the thread of life; but by an act of divine determination, and judgment, which passes in reference to each one's death. For as the key signifies authority and power, the turning this key of death, which gives a man his exit out of this world, is an authoritative act. And, do we consider in what hand this power is lodged, we cannot but apprehend every such act is the effect of counsel and judgment.

What philosophers are wont to discourse of fortuitous events in reference to rational agents, or casual, in reference to natural, must be understood only with relation to ourselves, and signifies our own ignorance of futurities, but can have no place in the all-comprehending Mind, as if any thing were a contingency unto that. For them that live as if they thought they came into this world by chance, it is very natural for them to think they shall die and go out of it by chance too, but when, and as, it happens. This is worse than paganish blindness; for besides what, from their poets, the vulgar have been made to believe

concerning the three fatal Sisters, to whom they ascribed no less than deity concerned in measuring every one's life, the grave discourses which some of them have written concerning providence, and its extent to the lesser intermediate concerns of life, much more to that their final great concern of death, will be a standing testimony against the too-prevailing Christian scepticism (they ought to excuse the solecism who make it) of this wretched age! But such among us as will allow themselves the liberty to think, want not opportunity and means by which they may be assured, that not an imaginary, but real Deity is immediately and constantly concerned in measuring our time in this world. What an awful thought is this! And it leads to a—

2nd. Inference. That *it is a great thing to die.* The Son of God, the Redeemer of man, hath an immediate presidency over this. He signalizes himself by it, who could not suppose that he should be magnified by a trifle! We slightly say, Such a one is dead! Consider the matter in itself, and it is great. A reasonable soul hath changed states! An intelligent spirit is gone out of our world! The life of a gnat, a fly, (those little *automata*, or self-moving things,) how admirable a production is it! It becomes no man to despise what no man can imitate. We praise the pencil that well describes the external figure of such an *animalculum*, such a little creature; but the internal, vital, self-moving power, and the motion itself, what art can express? But a human life, how important a thing is it! It was one of Plato's thanksgivings, that God had made him a man! How careful a guard hath God set over every man's life, fencing it by the severest law! "If any man shed man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed;" and how weighty is the annexed reason! "For in the image of God he made man." This then highly greatens this matter. He therefore reserves it wholly to himself, as one of his peculiarities, to dispose of such a life! "I am he that kills and makes alive." We find it one of his high titles—"The God of the spirits of all flesh." He had what was much greater to glory in, that he was "the Father of spirits," indefinitely spoken. When he hath all the heavenly regions, the spacious *hades*, peopled with such inhabitants "whose dwelling is not with flesh," and, for vast multitudes of them, never was; that yet, looking down into this little world of ours, this minute spot of his creation, and observing that here were spirits dwelling in flesh, he should please to be styled also the God of those spirits, signifies this to be with him too an appropriate glory, a glory which he will not communicate farther than he communicates Godhead; and that he held it a divine right to measure the time unto each of them of their abode in flesh, and determine when they shall dislodge.

This cannot be thought on aright, without a becoming, most

profound reverence of him on this account. How sharp a rebuke is given to that haughty prince, "The God in whose hands thy breath is, hast thou not glorified." Dan. v. 23. That would prepare the way, and we should be easily led on, were we once come to think with reverence, to think also with pleasure of this case, that our life and every breath we draw are under such a divine superintendency. The holy Psalmist speaks of it with high complacency, as the matter of his song, that he had a God presiding over his life. So he tells us, he would have each *νυχθήμερον*, composed not more of *night* and *day*, than of *prayer* and *praise* directed to God under this notion, as the God of his life. Ps. xlii. 8. And he speaks it not grudgingly, but as the ground of his trust and boast, (Ps. xxxi. 14, 15,)—"I trusted in thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my God, my times are in thy hand." That this key is in the hand of the great "Immanuel—God with us," will be thought on with frequency, when it is thought on with delight.

3. *Our life on earth is under the constant strict observation of our Lord Christ.* He waits when to turn the key, and shut it up. Through the whole of that time, which, by deferring, he measures out to us, we are under his eye as in a state of probation. He takes continual notice how we acquit ourselves. For his turning the key at last is a judicial act; therefore supposes diligent observation, and proceeds upon it. He that hath this key, is also said in the next chapter, (*v.* 18,) to have eyes like a flame of fire. With these he observes what he hath against one or another, (*v.* 20,) and with most indulgent patience gives a space of repentance, (*v.* 21,) and notes it down if any then repent not, as we there also find. Did secure sinners consider this, how he beholds them with a flame in his eye, and the key in his hand, would they dare still to trifle? If they did apprehend how he, in this posture, stands over them, in all their vain dalliances, idle impertinencies, bold adventures, insolent attempts against his laws and government, presumptuous affronts of his high authority; yea, or but in their drowsy slumberings, their lingering delays; did they consider what notice he takes how they demean themselves under every sermon they hear, in every prayer wherein they are to join with others, or which, perhaps, for custom's sake, they put up alone by themselves; how their hearts are moved, or unmoved, by every repeated call that is given them to turn to God, and get their peace made by application of their Redeemer's reconciling blood; in what agonies would they be, what pangs of trembling would they feel within themselves, lest the key should turn before their great work be done!

4. *Whatsoever ill designs by this observation he discovers, it is easy to him to prevent.* One turn of this key of death, besides the many other ways that are obvious to him, disappoints them

all, and in that day all their thoughts perish. It is not, therefore, from inadvertency, indifferency, or impotency, but *deep counsel*, that they are permitted to be driven on so far. "He that sitteth in the heavens laughs, and he knows their day is coming." He can turn this key when he will.

5. *His power as to every one's death connot be avoided, or withstood.* The act of this key is definitive, and ends the business. "No man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; nor hath he power in the day of death." Eccl. viii. 8. It is in vain to struggle, when the key is turned; the power of the keys, where it is supremely lodged, is absolutely decisive, and their effect permanent and irrevocable. That soul therefore for whose exit the key is turned, must thereupon then forthwith depart, willing or unwilling, ready or unready.

6. *Souls that go out of this world of ours, on the turn of this key, go not out of being.* He that hath this key of death, hath also the key of *hades*, a key and a key. When he uses the former, to let them out from this, he uses the latter, to give them their inlet into the other world; and into the one or the other part of it, into the upper or the lower *hades*, as the state of their case is, and doth require.

Our business is not now with pagans, to whom the oracles of God are unknown. If it were, the best and wisest of them who so commonly speak of souls going into *hades*, never thought of their going no whither; nor, therefore, that they were nothing. They had reasons, then, which they thought cogent, that induced them, though unassisted with divine revelation, to conclude they survived their forsaken bodies. And what else could any unbribed understanding conclude or conceive? When we find they have powers belonging to them, which we can much more easily apprehend capable of being acted without help from the body than by it; we are sure they can form thoughts, purposes, desires, hopes; for it is matter of fact, they do it; and coherent thoughts, and thoughts arising from thoughts, one from another; —yea, and thoughts abstracted from any thing corporeal, the notions of right and wrong, of virtue and vice, of moral good and evil, with some agreeable resolves; thoughts quite above the sphere of matter, so as to form a notion of the mind itself, of a spiritual being, as unexceptionable a one as we can form of a body; yea, of an original self-subsistent mind and spirit, the Former and Maker of all other. It is much more apprehensible, since we certainly know that all this is done, that it is done without any help of the body, than how flesh, or blood, or bones, or nerves, or brains, or any corporeal thing, should contribute to such methods of thinking, or to any thought at all. And if it can be conceived that a spirit can act without dependence on a

body, what should hinder but we may as well conceive it to subsist and live without such dependence? And, when we find this power of thought belongs to somewhat in us that lives, since the deserted carcass thinks not, how reasonable is it to suppose that, as the body lives not of itself, or life is not essential to it, for life may be retired and gone, and it remain, as we see it doth, the same body still; that the soul, to which the power of thought belongs, lives of itself, not independently on the First Cause, but essentially, so as to receive life and essence together from that cause, or life included in its essence, so as that it shall be the same thing to it, to be, and to live. And hereupon, how obvious is it to apprehend that the soul is such a thing as can live in the body, which when it doth, the body lives by it a precarious, borrowed life; and that can live out of the body, leaving it, when it does so, to drop and die.

These sentiments were so reasonable, as generally to prevail with the more deeply-thinking part of mankind, philosophers of all sorts, (a few excepted, whose notions were manifestly formed by vicious inclination,) in the pagan world, where was nothing higher than reason to govern. But we have "life and immortality brought to light in the gospel," (2 Tim. i. 10,) and are forewarned by it, that these will be the measures of the final judgment, to give "eternal life at last to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality," (Rom. ii. 7,) to the rest, indignation, and wrath, &c. (*v.* 8,) because there is no respect of persons with God: (*v.* 11,) as supposing the discovery of another world, even by natural light, much more by the addition of supernatural, to be so clear, as that the rule of the universal judgment, even for all, is most righteously to be taken from hence, and that there is nothing but a resolution of living wickedly to be opposed to it.

It is also no slight consideration, that a susceptibleness of religion should, among the creatures that dwell on earth, be so appropriate and peculiar to man, and (some rare instances excepted) as far diffused as human nature; so as to induce some very considering men, of the ancients as well as moderns, both pagans and Christians, to think *religion* the more probable specifying difference of man than *reason*. And whence should so common an impression be, but from a cause as common? Or how can we avoid to think that this signature upon the soul of man, a capacity of religion, should be from the same hand that formed the spirit of man within him; and that a natural religiousness, and human nature itself, had the same Author? But who sees not that religion, as such, hath a final reference to a future state? He was no despicable writer, though not a Christian, that positively affirmed hope towards God to be

essential to man; and that they that had it not, were not partakers of the rational nature.*

It is so much the more a deplorable and monstrous thing, that so many, not only against the light of their own reason, but of divine revelation, are so industrious to unman themselves; and having so effectually in a great degree done it really and in practice, aim to do it in a more compendious way notionally and in principle too; and make use or show of reason to prove themselves not to be reasonable creatures, or to divest themselves of the principal dignity and distinction of the rational nature; and are incomparably herein more unnatural than such as we commonly count felons upon themselves, who only act against their own bodily life, but these against the much nobler life of their soul; they against the life of an individual, these against their own whole species at once. And how deplorable is their case, that count it their interest to be in no possibility of being happy! when yet their so great dread of a future state, as to urge them upon doing the most notorious violence to their own faculties to rid themselves of it, is a very convictive argument of its reality; for their dread still pursues and sticks close to them. This shows it lies deep in the nature of things which they cannot alter. The terrible image is still before their eyes; and their principal refuge lies only in diverting, in not attending to it. And they can so little trust to their own sophistical reasonings against it, that when they have done all they can, they must owe what they have of ease and quiet in their own minds, not so much to any strength of reason they apprehend in their own thoughts, as in not thinking. A bold jest may sometimes provoke others' laughter, when it does not extinguish their own fear. A suspicion, a *formido oppositi*, will still remain; a misgiving that they cannot nullify the great *hades*, pull down the spacious fabric of heaven, or undermine the profound abyss of hell, by a profane scoff. They will in time discern the difference between the evanid passions of a sudden fright, that takes its rise from imagination, and the fixed dread which is founded in the reason of things; as one may between a fright in a dream, and the dread of a condemned criminal, with whom, sleeping and waking, the real state of his case is still the same.

Nor are the things themselves remote or unconnected; God's right to punish a reasonable creature that has lived in contempt of him, and his own reasonable apprehension hereof, or his conscience both of the fact and desert. They answer as face to face, as the stamp on the seal, and the impression on the wax. They would fain make their reason a protection against their fear, but that cannot serve both ways: the reason of the thing

* Philo Judæus, Quod deter. potiori insid. soleat, *ὡς τῶν μὴ ἐλπιζόντων ἐπὶ Θεὸν, λογικῆς φύσεως οὐ μεμοιραμένων.*

lies against them already, and there cannot be an eternal war between the faculty and the object. One way or other the latter will overpower the former, and draw it into consent with itself; either by letting it see there is a just, true cause of fear, or, assisted by divine grace, prevail for the change of the sinner's course: whereupon that troublesome fear, and its cause, will both upon the best terms cease together. And that what has been proposed to consideration under this head, may be the more effectually considered to this blessed purpose, I add that,—

7. The discovery of the invisible world, and the disposal of affairs there, have *a most encouraging aspect upon this world:* for both the discovery and the disposal are by our blessed Redeemer, in whom mercy and might are met in highest perfection. How fragrant breathings of grace, how glorious a display of power, are there in what he here says: "Fear not! I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead, and I am alive for evermore, Amen. And I have the keys of *hades* and of death." He hath opened the celestial *hades* to our view, that it might be also open to our safe entrance and blissful inhabitation. He who was dead, but liveth, and had made his victorious triumphant entrance before us, and for us; he who had overcome him that had the power of death, conquered the gigantic monster at the gate, gained the keys, and designed herein their deliverance from the fear of death, who were thereby subject to bondage, (Heb. ii. 14, 15;)—he who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light in the gospel, (2 Tim. i. 10;) it is *he* who bids us lift up our eyes, and behold the heavens opened, and himself standing at the right hand of God. The horrid, infernal *hades*, he hath discovered too, only that we might fear and shun it. But yet more distinctly consider, why doth he here represent himself under this character, "He that liveth and was dead," but that he might put us in mind of that most convictive argument of his love, his submitting to die for us; "Greater love hath no man;" and that he might at once put us out of doubt concerning his power, that he yet survives, and is sprung up alive out of that death, victorious over it. How amiable is the representation of such power in conjunction with such love! The same person having a heart so replenished with love, a hand so armed with power, neither capable of *unkind* design, nor unable to effect the *most kind*. Behold him in this representation! Who would not now fall at his foot and adore? Who would hesitate at resigning to him, or be appalled at his disclosure of this unknown world?

Do but consider him who makes the discovery, and who would not expect from him the utmost efforts of love and goodness? From him who is the Brightness of his Father's glory,

and the express Image of his person! His essential Image, who is Love! From him who came into this wretched world of ours, full of grace and truth, and who could not have come but by the inducement of compassion to our miseries! From him who knows all things, and whose eye penetrates into every recess of the vast *hades*, all his own empire; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, but who only knows not to deceive; who hath told us, in his Father's house are many mansions, and if it were not so, would have told us that! John xiv. 2. From him into whose mouth guile never entered, but into whose lips grace was poured, and is poured out by them; so that the ear that hath heard him hath borne him witness, and filled with wonder those that heard the gracious words which came out of his mouth! Who hath told us all concerning that unseen world, that in this our present state it was fit for us to know; and enough, in telling all that will be his followers, that where he is, there he will have them be! John xvii. 24.

And consider the manifest tendency of the discovery itself. What doth it mean or tend to, but to undeceive miserable mortals, whom he beholds from his high throne mocked with shadows, beguiled with most delusive impostures, and easily apt to be imposed upon? Foolish, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures; feeding upon ashes, and wearying themselves for very vanity; sporting themselves in the dust of this minute spot of earth; wasting their little inch of time, wherein they should prepare for translation into the regions of unseen glory: —to these he declares he hath formed a kingdom for all that covet to mend their states, and that his kingdom is not of this world; that for such as will be of this kingdom, he will provide better, having other worlds, the many heavens, above all which he is ascended, at his disposal. Eph. iv. 10. But they must seek this kingdom and the righteousness of it in the first place, and desist from their care about other things. He counsels and warns them not to lay up their treasure on earth, but in heaven; and to let their hearts be there with their treasure. And what can withstand his power, who, having been dead, liveth victorious over him that had the power of death, and is alive for evermore, possessed of an eternal state of life?

And have we not reason to expect the most equal and most benign disposal of things in that unseen world, when he also declares, I have the keys, rightful authority, as well as mighty power, to reward and punish? None but who have a very ill mind can fear from him an ill management. He first became capable of dying, and then yielded himself to die, that he might obtain these keys for gracious purposes. He had them before to execute just vengeance, as he was originally in the form of

God, and without robbery equal with God; an equal sharer in sustaining the wrong that had been done by apostate rebels, and an equal sharer in the right of vindicating it.

But that he might have these keys to open the heavenly *hades* to reduced apostates, to penitent, believing, self-devoting sinners, for this it was necessary he should put on man, be found here in fashion as a man, take on him the form of a servant, become obedient to death, even that servile punishment, the death of the cross. Phil. ii. 7, 8. For this he is highly exalted into this power, that every knee might bow to him, in hope of saving mercy, *v.* 9, 10, compared with Isaiah xlv. 22, 23. He had the keys without this, of the supernal *hades*, to shut out all offenders, and of the infernal, to shut them up for ever. But that he might have them to absolve repenting believers, and admit them into heaven, and only to shut up in hell implacable enemies—for this he must die, and live again. He was to be slain and hanged on a tree, "that he might be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sin." Acts v. 30, 31. That to this intent he might be Lord of the dead and the living, he must both die and rise, and live so as to die no more. Rom. xiv. 9. These keys, for this purpose, he was only to have upon these terms. He had a right to punish as an offended God; but to pardon and save as a mediating, sin-expiating, God-man.

But as he was to do the part of a Mediator, he must act equally between the disagreeing parties; he was to deal impartially on both sides; to render back entire to the injured Ruler of the world his violated rights, and to obtain for us his forfeited favour, as entire; and he undertook therefore, when as a sacrifice he was to be slain, to redeem us to God by his blood, (Rev. v. 9;) to give him back his revolted creature, holy, pure, subject, and serviceable, as by his methods he shall be at last; and procure for him pardon, acceptance, and eternal blessedness.

When, therefore, he was to do for us the part of a Redeemer, he was to redeem us from the *curse* of the law, not from the *command* of it; to save us from the *wrath* of God, not from his *government*. Gal. iii. 13, 14; Rom. viii. 3, 4. Had it been otherwise, so firm and indissoluble is the connection between our duty and our felicity, that the sovereign Ruler had been eternally injured, and we not advantaged. Were we to have been set free from the preceptive obligation of God's holy law, then most of all from that most fundamental precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, soul, might, and mind;" had this been redemption, which supposes only what is evil and hurtful, as that we are to be redeemed from! This were a strange sort of self-repugnant redemption—from our duty

and felicity! This were so to be redeemed as to be still lost, and every way lost, both to God and to ourselves for ever. Redeemed from loving God! What a monstrous thought! Redeemed from what is the great active and fruitive principle; the source of obedience and blessedness; the eternal spring, even in the heavenly state, of adoration and fruition! This had been to legitimate everlasting enmity and rebellion against the blessed God, and to redeem us into an eternal hell of horror and misery to ourselves! This had been to cut off from the supreme Ruler of the world for ever, so considerable a limb of his most rightful dominion, and to leave us as miserable as everlasting separation from the Fountain of life and blessedness could make us.

When, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ was to redeem us from the curse of the law, it was that the promised Spirit might be given to us, (Gal. iii. 13, 14,) who should write the law in our hearts, (Jer. xxxi. 33; Ezek. xxxvi. 27;) fulfil the righteousness of it in us, by causing us to walk after his dictates, according to that law; regenerating us, begetting us after God's image, and making us partakers of a Godlike nature. So we through the law become dead to the malediction and curse of it, that we may live to God more devoted lives than ever. Gal. ii. 19. Thus is God's lost creature given back to him with the greatest advantage also to itself.

With this design it is apparent our Lord redeemed us, and by his redemption acquired these keys. Nor are we to doubt but, in the use of them, he will dispense exactly according to this just and merciful design. And what a perverse distorted mind is that, which can so much as wish it should be otherwise! *viz.* That he should save us to the eternal wrong of him that made us, and so as that we should be nothing the better; *i. e.* that he should save us without saving us!

And hath this no pleasant comfortable aspect upon a lost world, that he who hath these keys will use them for such purposes? *i. e.* to admit to eternal bliss, and save to the uttermost, all that will come to God by him; (not willing to be everlastingly alienated from the life of God;) because he ever lives to make intercession, or to transact and negotiate for them, (as that word signifies,) and that in a rightful way, and even by the power of these keys!

8. That *there must be some important reason why the other world is to us unseen,* and so truly bears the name of *hades.* This expresses the state of the case as in fact it is, that it is a world lying out of our sight, and into which our dim and weak eye cannot penetrate. That other state of things is spoken of therefore as hidden from us by a veil. When our Lord Jesus is said to have passed into the heavens, (Heb. iv. 14,) he is also

said to have entered into that within the veil, (Heb. vi. 19, 20;) alluding to that in the temple of Solomon, and before that, in Moses's tabernacle; but expressly signifying, that the holy places into which Christ entered, not those made with hands, which were the figures of the true, but heaven itself, filled with the glorious presence of God, where he appears for us, (Heb. ix. 24,) is also veiled from us. As also the glory of the other state is said to be a glory as yet to be revealed, Rom. viii. 18. And we are told, (Job. xxvi. 9,) the great God holdeth back the face of his throne; and above, (*v.* 6,) it is represented as a divine prerogative, that *sheol*, which is there groundlessly rendered *hell*, the vast *hades*, is only naked before him, lies entirely open to his view, and therein the dark and horrid part of it, *destruction*, by which peculiarly must be meant *hell*, is to him without a covering, not more hidden from his eye. Which shows this to be the divine pleasure; so God will have it be, who could have exposed all to common view, if he had pleased.

But because he orders all things according to the counsel of his will, (Eph. i. 11,) we must conceive some weighty reason did induce hereto, that whatsoever lies beyond this present state of things should be concealed from our immediate view, and so come, *uno nomine*, to be all called *hades*. And if the reason of God's conduct, and the course of his dispensation herein, had been equally hidden, as that state itself is, it had been a bold presumption to inquire and pry into it; modesty and reverence should have restrained us. But when we find it holds a manifest agreement with other parts of his counsel, that are sufficiently revealed; and that the excellency of the Divine Wisdom is most conspicuous, and principally to be beheld and admired, in ordering the apt congruities and correspondencies of things with each other, and especially of the ends he proposes to himself, with the methods and ways he takes to effect them; it were very great oscitancy, and an undutiful negligence, not to observe them when they stand in view, that we may render him his due acknowledgments and honour thereupon.

It is manifest that as God did not create man, at first, in that which he designed to be his final state, but as a probationer, in a state of trial, in order to a further state; so when he apostatized and fell from God, he was graciously pleased to order for him a new trial, and put him into the hands of his merciful Redeemer, who is intrusted with these keys, and with the power of life and death over him, to be managed and exercised according to the terms plainly set down and declared in his gospel. Wheresoever he is with sufficient evidence revealed and made known, men immediately come under obligation to believe in him; to entrust and commit themselves into the same hands; to rely upon the truth of his word in every

thing he reveals, as the ground of their submitting to his authority in every thing he requires. What concerns their present practice, he hath plainly shown them; so much as it was requisite they should pre-apprehend of future retributions, rewards and punishments, he hath revealed also; not that they should have the knowledge hereof by immediate inspection, but by taking his word: that as their first transgression was founded in infidelity, that they did not believe God, but a lying spirit against him; their first step in their recovery and return to God should be to believe him, and take his word about things they have themselves no immediate sight or knowledge of. This point was by no means to be quitted to the first apostates. As, if God's saying to them, "If you transgress, you shall die, or go into *hades*," was no sufficient enforcement of the precept, unless he had given them a distinct view of the state of felicity or misery, which their obedience or disobedience would lead them into; this had been to give away the whole cause to the revolted rebels, and rather to confess error and oversight in the divine government, than impute fault to the impugners of it!

This being the state of the case, how suitable had it been to the design of this second trial to be made with men, to withdraw the veil, and let every one's own eyes be their informers of all the glories of the heavenly state! and hereupon proclaim and preach the gospel to them, that they should all partake herein that would entirely deny themselves, come off from their own bottom, give themselves up absolutely to the interest, love, service, and communion, of their Redeemer, and of God in him! to fortify them against the assaults and dangers of their earthly pilgrimage by reversing that rule, "The just shall live by faith;—even that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," (Heb. x. 38,—*ch.* xi. 1;) or by inverting the method, that in reference to such things "we are to walk by faith, not by sight," (2 Cor. v. 7,) and letting it be, We are to walk by sight, not by faith! And that lest any should refuse such compliance with their great Lord, whole *hades* should be no longer so, but made naked before them, and the covering of hell and destruction be taken off, and their own eyes behold the infernal horrors, and their own ears hear the shrieks and howlings of accursed creatures, that having rejected their Redeemer, are rejected by him? We are not here to consider, what course would most certainly effect their salvation, but what most became the wise holy God, to preserve the dignity of his own government, and save them too; otherwise almighty power could save all at once. As, therefore, we have cause to acknowledge the kindness and compassion of our blessed Lord, who hath these keys, in giving us, for the kind,

such notices as he hath, of the state of the things in *hades*; so we have equal cause to admire his wisdom, that he gives us not those of another kind, that should more powerfully strike the sense, and amaze us more, but instruct us less; that continues it to be *hades* still, a state of things to us unseen as yet. As the case would have been on the other supposition, the most generous, noble part of our religion had been sullied or lost; and the trial of our faith, which is to be found unto praise, honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, even upon this account—that they who had not seen him in his mean circumstances on earth, nor did *now* see him amidst all the glories of his exalted state, yet *believing*, loved him, and rejoiced in him "with joy unspeakable and full of glory," (1 Pet. i. 7, 8:) this faith, and all the glorious trials of it, with its admirable achievements and performances, whereby the elders heretofore obtained so good a report, (Heb. xi. 2,) and high renown on earth, and which filled the world with wonder, had all vanished into obscurity and darkness; *i. e.* if they had believed no more, or no greater things, than every man besides had the immediate view of by his own eye-sight.

And yet the trial had been greater on another account, than the divine wisdom, in conjunction with goodness and compassion, thought fit ordinarily to put sincere Christians upon. For who could with any tolerable patience have endured longer abode on earth, after they should once have had the glory of the heavenly state immediately set in view before their eyes; especially considering, not so much the sufferings, as the impurities of their present state? What, for great reason, was a special vouchsafement to one apostle, was, for as great, (not) to be common to all Christians. How great is the wisdom and mercy of our blessed Lord in this partial concealment of our future state, and that while so much as is sufficient is revealed, there is yet a *hades* upon it, and it may still be said, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." 1 John iii. 2.

But as these majestic life-breathing words of our great Lord do plainly offer the things that have been mentioned, and many more such that might occur to our thoughts and meditation; so will they be thought on in vain, if they be not followed and answered by suitable dispositions and actions of heart and life. Therefore the further use we are to make of this great subject will be to lay down,—

II. Divers correspondent things to be practised and done, which must also suppose dispositions and frames of heart and spirit agreeable thereto.

1. *Let us live expecting a period to be ere long put to our life on earth.* For, remember, there are keys put into a great hand for this very purpose, that holds them not in vain. His power

is of equal extent with the law he is to proceed by. And by that "it is appointed for all once to die." Heb. ix. 27. Therefore as in the execution he cannot exceed, so he will not come short of this appointment: when that once shall be, it belongs to him to determine. And from the course we may observe him to hold, as it is uncertain to all, it can be very remote to none. How short is the measure of a span! It is an absurd vanity to promise ourselves that which is in the power of another. How wise and prudent a thing to accommodate ourselves composedly to his pleasure, in whose power we are; and to live as men continually expecting to die! There are bands of death, out of which, when they once take hold, we cannot free ourselves. But there are also bands of life, not less troublesome or dangerous. It is our great concern to be daily, by degrees, loosening and disentangling ourselves from these bands: and for preventing the necessity of a violent rupture, to be daily disengaging our hearts from an ensnaring world, and the too close embraces of an over-indulged body. Tell them resolutely, I must leave them whensoever my great Lord turns the key for me: and I know not how soon that may be. It is equally unhappy and foolish to be engaged in the pursuit of an impossibility, or in a war with necessity; the former whereof cannot be obtained, the latter cannot but overcome. We owe so much to ourselves, and to the ease and quiet of our own minds, to be reconciled, at all times, to that which may befall us at any time. How confounding a thing is surprisal by that which we regret and dread! How unaccountable and ignominious must it be to pretend to be surprised with what we have so great reason always to expect, and whereof we are so oft forewarned! Is it no part of Christian watchfulness to wait for such an hour? Though that waiting "all the days of our appointed time," mentioned (Job xiv. 14,) refers to another change than that of death, *viz.* (as the foregoing and following verses show,) that of the resurrection, yet it cannot but be equally requisite, upon a no less important reason. And the requests that the Lord would "make us to know our end, and the measure of our days, that we may know how frail we are," (Ps. xxxix. 4,) and that he would "teach us so to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom," (Ps. xc. 12,) are equally monitory to the same purpose, as the most express precepts: as also the many directions we have to watch and wait for our Lord's appearance and coming, are as applicable to this purpose. For whensoever his key opens our passage out of this world, and out of these bodies, *hades* opens too, and he particularly appears to us, in as decisive a judgment of our case, as his universal appearance and judgment will at last give for all. The placid agreement of our minds and spirits with divine

determination, both as to the thing, and time, of our departure hence, will prevent the trouble and ungratefulness of being surprised; and our continual expectation of it, will prevent any surprisal at all. Let this then be an agreed resolution with us, to endeavour being in such a posture, as that we may be capable of saying, "Lord, whensoever thou shalt move thy key, and tell me this night, or this hour, I will require thy soul, thou shalt not, O Lord, prevent mine expectation, or ever find me counting upon many years' enjoyment of any thing this world can entertain me with."

In further pursuance hereof,—

2. *Be not over-intent on designs for this present world;* which would suppose you to count upon long abode in it. Let them be always laid with a supposition, you may this way, even by one turn of this key, be prevented from bringing them about; and let them be pursued with indifferency, so as that disappointment even this way may not be a grievance. A thing made up of thought and design, as our mind and spirit naturally is, will be designing one way or other; nor ought we to attempt that violence upon our own natures, as to endeavour the stupifying of the intelligent, designing mind, which the Author of nature hath put into us. Only let us so lay our designs, as that how many soever we form that may be liable to this sort of disappointment, we may still have *one* greater and more important, so regularly and surely laid, that not urn of this key shall be in any possibility to frustrate, but promote it rather. The design for the kingdom of God to be first sought, with his righteousness, (Matt. vi. 33,) or which is pursued by seeking glory, honour, and immortality, to the actual attainment of eternal life, (Rom. ii. 7,) may, if prescribed methods be duly observed, have this felicity always attending it, to be successfully pursued while we live, and effected when we die.

But this is an unaccountable vanity under the sun, that men too generally form such projects, that they are disappointed both when they do not compass them, and when they do. If they do not, they have lost their labour; if they do, they are not worth it. They dream they are eating, and enjoying the fruit of their labour; but they awake, and their soul is empty. And if at length they think of laying wiser and more valuable designs, the key turns; and not having fixed their resolution, and begun aright, they and all their thoughts, foolish, or more wise, perish together. Because there is a fit season for every fit undertaking, a time and judgment for every purpose, or a critical time, such as is by judgment affixed to every such purpose; (Eccl. viii. 6,) and because also men know not their time, (*ch.* ix. 12,) therefore their misery is great upon the earth; and as birds caught in a snare, they are snared in an

evil time that falleth suddenly upon them. O miserable, miserable mortals!—so are your immortal spirits misemployed and lost!

Their most valuable design for another world is seldom thought on in season; their little designs for this world they contrive and prosecute with that confidence, as if they thought the world to be theirs, and themselves their own, and they had no Lord over them. This rude insolence that holy apostle animadverts upon, of such as say, "To-day or to-morrow we will go to such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas they know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is their life? A vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." James iv. 13–15. So much of duty and becoming behaviour is in the meantime forgotten, as to say, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that." This is to bear themselves as absolute masters of their own lives. How bold an affront to their sovereign Lord! They feel themselves well in health, strength, and vigour, and seem resolved it shall be a trial of skill who hath the power, or to whom the keys belong, till it come to the last irrefragable demonstration, that he changes their countenance, and sends them away, (Job xiv. 20;) and then they go driven, plucked and torn away, from their dwelling-place, rooted out of the land of the living. Ps. lii. 5.

But if any premonitory decays make them doubt the perpetuity of their own abode here, they somewhat ease their minds by the pleasure they take in thinking, when they have filled their own bellies, (Ps. xvii. 14,) what they shall leave of their substance to their babes, and to them that shall come after. And "their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; and they call their lands after their own names, and their posterity approve their sayings," (Ps. xlix. 11,) think and act as wisely as they. Thus they take upon them, and reckon that they for their time, and theirs after them, shall still dwell in their own. A wise thought! They are the owners, when another keeps the keys!

Several other things of like import I shall more lightly touch, that may be collected from what hath been already more largely said, and leave to be further enlarged upon in your own thoughts; and shall dilate more upon some other, as they are either more material, or less thought on by the most.

3. *Be not prodigal of your time on earth*, which is so little in your power. Because you are not to expect much, make the best use you can of your little. It is so precious a thing that it is to be redeemed: it is, therefore, too precious to be embezzled and trifled away. The connexion of those two pre-

cepts, (Eph. v. 15, 16,) of walking circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, and that of redeeming the time, more than intimates, that to squander time is a foolish thing. Of the several sorts of things that we make ourselves, their shape and frame show their use and end. Are we to make a less judicious estimate of the works of God? If we, therefore, contemplate ourselves, and consider what a sort of production man is, can we allow ourselves to think God made him a reasonable creature on purpose to play the fool? Or can we live as if we thought so, without reproaching our Maker? But whereas he who hath been the Author to us of such a nature, capable of improving a life's time in this world unto most valuable purposes, hath also been the Author of such a law, requiring us to redeem time; the reproach will be wholly turned off from him upon ourselves, and our consequent ruin be upon our own guilty heads. And he will find some among ourselves, who by the advantage only of the reasonable nature, common to us and them, are instructors to us not to waste our days in vanity, and will be witnesses against us if we so foolishly consume what we cannot command.

Some such have unanswerably reprehended the common folly of those that dread the thought of throwing away their whole life at once, that yet have no regret at throwing it all away by parcels and piece-meal. And have told us, "A wise man can find nothing of that value, for which to barter away his time."*

And we are to consider, that as we are reasonable creatures, we are accountable: that we are shut up in these bodies, as in workhouses: that when he that keeps the keys lets us out, we are to "receive the things done in the body, according to what we have done, whether good or evil," (2 Cor. v. 10,) that it belongs to him that measures our time to censure it too, and the use we have made of it.

4. *Let him be at once both great and amiable in our eyes, who hath so absolute power over us, and so gracious propensions towards us;* who hath these keys, and who acquired them with so merciful intentions, even upon such terms as could not but signify the greatest compassion and good-will towards such as we.

Reconsider what hath been offered as matter of meditation, to both these purposes. And now, hereupon, let us endeavour to have a correspondent sense inwrought into our hearts, and to bear ourselves towards him accordingly. The power and efficacy of whole Christianity depends upon this, and doth very principally consist in it. What a faint, impotent, languishing thing is our religion, how doth it dwindle into spiritless, dead

* Neque quicquam reperit dignum, quod cum tempore suo permutaret.—Sen.

form without it! The form of knowledge is nothing else but insipid, dead notion, and our forms of worship only fruitless, unpleasant formality, if we have not a vivid sense in our hearts both of his glorious greatness, and of his excellent loving-kindness. As much as words can signify towards the impressing such a sense into our hearts, we have in these words, uttered from his own mouth; so that he may say, as that memorable type of him once did, You may plainly perceive, "It is my mouth that speaketh to you." Gen. xlv. "I am the First and the Last. I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." And hereto he now sets his solemn, ratifying seal, *Amen.* Wherewith he leaves us to pause, and collect, that thus it was brought about, that he could add, "And I have the keys of the vast *hades*, the whole *unseen world*, and of death." And God forbid that, now, these words should be with us an empty sound, or a dead letter! Let us cast in our minds what manner of salutation this should be! Doth the Son of God thus vouchsafe to bespeak miserable abjects; perishing, lost wretches? How can we hereupon but bow our heads and worship? What agitations of affection should we feel within! How should all our internal powers be moved, and our whole souls made as the chariots of Amminadab! What can we now be unwilling of, that he would have us be, or do! And as that whereof we may be assured he is most willing.

5. *Let us entirely receive him, and absolutely resign ourselves to him, as our Prince and Saviour.* Who would not covet to be in special relation to so mighty and so kind a Lord? And can you think to be related to him upon other terms? And do you not know that upon these you may, when in his gospel he offers himself, and demands you? What can that mean but that you are to receive him, and resign yourselves? The case is now brought to this state, that you must either comply, or rebel. And what! rebel against him who hath these keys, who is in so high authority over the whole unseen world! Who is "the Head of all principality and power, who is gone into the heavens, the glorious upper *hades*, and is at the right hand of God, angels, authorities, powers, being made subject to him!" 1 Peter iii. 22. We little know or can conceive, as yet, the several orders and distinctions of the celestial inhabitants, and their great and illustrious princes and potentates, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, that all pay him a dutiful and a joyful subjection and obedience. But do we not know God hath "given him a name above every name, and that in his name," or at it, as it may be read, *i. e.* in acknowledgment of his sovereign power, "every knee must bow, of things in heaven, on earth, and under earth, and all confess that he is Lord, to the praise and glory of God the Father?" And

who art thou, perishing wretch! that darest dispute his title? Or that, when all the creation must be subject to him, wilt except thyself?

And when it cost him so dear, that his vast power might be subservient to a design of grace, and thou must at last be saved by him, or lost for ever, what can tempt thee to stand out against such power and such grace?

If thou wert to gratify thy ambition, how glorious a thing is it to be a Christian; a subject, a devoted homager, to so mighty a Prince! If to provide against thy necessity and distress, what course can be so sure and successful, as to fly for refuge to so compassionate a Saviour? And dost thou not know there must be, to this purpose, an express transaction between him and thee? Wonder he will condescend to it! To capitulate with dust and ashes! To article with his own creature, with whom he may do what he will! But his merciful condescension herein is declared and known. If there shall be a special relation settled between him and thee, he hath told thee in what way it must be, *i. e.* by way of covenant transaction and agreement, as he puts his people of old in mind his way was with them; "I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine." Ezek. xvi. 8. This I insist upon and press, as a thing of the greatest importance imaginable, and the least thought of; nor the strange incongruity animadverted on, that we have the seals of such a covenant among us, but the covenant itself slips through our hands. Our baptism soon after we were born, with some federal words then, is thought enough, as if we were a nation always minors. Whoever, therefore, thou art, that hearest these words, or readest these lines, know that the great Lord is express towards thee in his gospel proposal—"Wilt thou accept me for thine, and resign thyself as mine?" He now expects and requires thy express answer. Take his gospel as from the cross, or take it as from the throne, or as from both, it is the same gospel, interwoven of grace and authority; the richest grace, and the highest authority; at once inviting and requiring thee to *commit* and *submit* thyself unto him. Take heed lest his key turn before thou hast given thy complying answer, importing at once both thy trust and thy subjection.

Give not over pleading with thyself, with thy wayward stupid heart, till it can say to him, "Lord, I yield; thou hast overcome:" till with tender relentings thou hast thrown thyself at his feet, and told him, "Lord, I am ashamed, I am confounded within myself, that thou shouldest die upon a cross to obtain thy high power, and that thou art now ready to use it for the saving of so vile a miscreant as I: that when thou hast so vast an unknown world, so numberless myriads of excellent crea-

tures in thy obedience, thou shouldest yet think it worth thy while to look after me; and that I should so long have withstood thy kind and gracious overtures and intendments! O forgive my wicked aversion! I now accept and resign."

And now this being sincerely done, with fulness of consent, with deep humility, with yearning bowels, with unfeigned thankfulness, and an inward complacency and gladness of heart;—

6. *Let your following course in this world be ordered agreeably hereto, in continued dependence and subjection.* "As we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so we are to walk in him." Col. ii. 6. Take him according to the titles here given him, as Christ, a Person anointed, authorized, qualified to be both Jesus, a *Saviour*, and so we are to walk, according to our first reception of him, in continual dependence on his saving mercy; and to be a Lord, or, as it is here expressed, with eminency, *the Lord*, so we are to walk in continual subjection to his governing power. Otherwise our receiving him, at first, under these notions, hath nothing in it but mockery and collusion.

But if his obtaining these keys, upon the terms here expressed, as having been dead, and now living, and having overcome death, as it is also Rom. xiv. 9, did signify his having them for saving purposes,—as it must, since for other purposes he had them sufficiently before; and if we reckon this a reasonable inducement to receive him, and commit and intrust ourselves to him as a Saviour, that he died, and overcame death; (for his grace in yielding to die, had not rendered him a competent object of trust, otherwise than in conjunction with his power in overcoming death, and so gaining into his hands these keys;) then, the same reason still remaining, how constant an encouragement have we to continue accordingly walking in him all our days! How potent an argument should it be to us, to live that life which we live in the flesh, by faith in the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us! (Gal. ii. 20,) *i.e.* inasmuch as having been crucified with him, (which is also there expressed,) we feel ourselves to live nevertheless; yet so as that it is not so much we that live, as Christ that liveth in us; who could not live in us, or be to us a spring of life, if he were not a perpetual spring of life in himself.

And consider, how darest thou live otherwise in this flesh, in this earthly house, whereof he keeps the keys, and can fetch thee out at his pleasure; when he hath warned thee to abide in him, that "when he shall appear, thou mayest have confidence, and not be ashamed at his coming." 1 John ii. 28. He will certainly then appear, when he comes to open the door, and dislodge thee from this flesh; (though there be here a further

and final reference to another appearance and coming of his;) and if he then find thee severed and disjoined from him, (thy first closure with him not having been sincere, truly unitive and vital,) how terribly will he look! how confoundedly wilt thou look in that hour!

Neither hast thou less reason to live in continual subjection to him, considering that as he died, and overcame death, that he might have these keys, so he now hath them, and thou art under his governing power. The more thou considerest his right to govern, the less thou wilt dispute it. When he was spoken of as a Child to us born, that he might become a Man of sorrows, and be sorrowful unto the death, and have all the sorrows of death come upon him, he is at the same time said to be the mighty God, and it was declared the government should be upon his shoulders. Isa. ix. 6. As he was the first begotten from the dead, both submitting to death, and conquering it, so he was the Prince of the kings of the earth, (a small part of his kingdom too,) his throne being founded on his cross, his governing power in his sacrifice; *i.e.* the power whereby he so governs, as that he may also save; making these two things, the salving the rights of the Godhead, injured by sin, and the delivering of the sinner from an eternal ruin, to agree and consist with one another.

What an endearing obligation is this to obey, that he will be the Author of eternal salvation to them that obey him! inasmuch as, while our obedience cannot merit the least thing from him, yet his vouchsafing to govern us doth most highly merit from us. For he governs by writing his law in the heart, which makes our heart agree with the law; and by implanting divine love in us, which vanquishes enmity and disaffection, and virtually contains in itself our obedience, or keeping his commandments. John xiv. 15, 23, and 1 John v. 3. Therefore this government of his, over us, is naturally necessary to our salvation and blessedness, and is the inchoation and beginning of it; as our perfected love to God, and conformity to his nature and will, do involve and contain in themselves our complete and perfect blessedness, with which a continued enmity, or a rebellious, mutinous disposition against God, is naturally inconsistent, and would be to us, and in us, a perpetual, everlasting hell.

There can, therefore, be no enthralling servitude in such obedience, but the truest liberty, that by which the Son makes us "free indeed," (John viii. 36,) yea, a true sort of royalty; for hereby we come, in the most allowable sense, to live as we will, our will being conformed to the will of God. Whereupon that was no high extravagant rant, but a sober expression, "We are born in a kingdom; to serve God is to reign."—*Seneca.*

And we know this to be the will of God, that all should "honour the Son, as they honour the Father." John v. 23. Herewith will the evangelically obedient comport with high complacency; accounting him most highly worthy that it should be so. Wherein, therefore, the Christian law seems strictest and most rigorous in the enjoined observance of our Lord Christ, herein we shall discern an unexceptionable reasonableness, and comply with a complacential approbation. And let us put our own hearts to it, and see that without regret or obmurmuration they can readily consent to the equity of the precept.

It is enjoined us, constructively at least, that because Christ died for us, when we were dead, quite lost in death; we that live hereupon, should settle this with ourselves as a fixed judgment, and upon that intervening judgment yield to the constraint of his love, so as henceforth no more to live to ourselves: *q.d.* God forbid we should henceforth be so profane! We must now for ever have done with that impious, unlawful way of living. What! after this, that we have so fully understood the state of our case, that we should be so assuming as ever again to offer at such a thing as living to ourselves, to make ourselves deities to ourselves; or to live otherwise than unto "him who died for us, and rose again!" 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. This is high and great, and may seem strict and severe. What! to have the whole stream of all the actions and aims, the strength and vigour of our lives, to be carried in one entire, undivided current unto him, and (as it must be understood, Gal. ii. 19,) to God in him, so as never more to live to ourselves, a divided, separate life apart from him, or wherein we shall not finally and more principally design for him! How high is his claim, but how equal and grateful to a right mind! With what a plenitude of consent is every divine command, taking this into the account, esteemed to be right in all things! so as that whatsoever is opposite, is hated as a "false way." Ps. cxix. 128. And as the precept carries its own visible reason, the keeping of it carries its own "reward" in itself. Ps. xix. 11. And is it too much for him who bears these keys, and obtained them on such terms, and for such ends, to be thus affected towards him?

We are required, without exception, without limitation or reserve, "whatsoever we do, whether in word or work, to do all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Col. iii. 17.

Inquire we, Do our hearts repine at this law? Do not we, doth not this world, owe so much to him? Why are we allowed a place and a time here? Why is not this world a flaming theatre? Is it not fit every one should know under whose government they live; by whose beneficence, under whose

protection, and in whose name they may act so or so, and by whose authority; either obliging, or not restraining them, requiring, or licensing them to do this or that? Doth this world owe less to him that bears these keys, than Egypt did to Joseph, when thus the royal word went forth in reference to him, "I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt?" How pleasant should it be to our souls, often to remember and think on that name of his which we bear, (Isa. xxvi. 8; Mal. iii. 16,) and draw in as vital breath the sweet odours of it. Cant. i. 3; Ps. xlv. 6—11; John xx. 28. How glorious a thing should we count it, because he is the "Lord our God, to walk in his name for ever and ever, as all people will walk every one in the name of their God." Mic. iv. 5. And then we shall account it no hard law, whatever we do, to do all in the name of our Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him, and for him; blessing God every day, that we are put by him under the mild and merciful government of a Redeemer. Then we shall rejoicingly avow, as the apostle doth, (1 Cor. ix. 21,) "that we are not without law to God, but under law to Christ."

Whereupon, when you find your special relation is thus settled and fixed unto the great Lord, both of this present visible world, and of *hades*, or the invisible world also, by your solemn covenant with him, and evidenced by the continued correspondency of your heart and life, your dispositions and actions, thereunto:—

7. *Do not regret or dread to pass out of the one world into the other at his call, and under his conduct*, though through the dark passage of death; remembering the keys are in so great and so kind a hand; and that his good pleasure herein is no more to be distrusted, than to be disputed or withstood. Let it be enough to you, that what you cannot see yourself, he sees for you. You have oft desired your ways, your motions, your removals from place to place, might be directed by him in the world. Have you never said, If thou go not with me, carry me not up hence? How safely and fearlessly may you follow him blindfold, or in the dark, any whither; not only from place to place in this world, but from world to world; how lightsome soever the one, and gloomy and dark the other may seem to you. Darkness and light are to him alike. To him, *hades* is no *hades*, nor is the dark way that leads into it to him an untrodden path. Shrink not at the thoughts of this translation, though it be not by escaping death, but even through the jaws of it.

We commonly excuse our aversion to die, by alleging that nature regrets it. But we do not enough consider, that in such a compounded sort of creature as we are, the word *nature*

must be ambiguous. There is in us a sensitive nature that regrets it: but taking the case as it is now stated, can we think it tolerable, that it should be regretted by the reasonable nature; unto which, if we appeal, can we suppose it so untrue to itself, as not to assert its own superiority; or to judge it fit that an intelligent, immortal spirit, capable of so great things in another world, should be content with a long abode here, only to keep a well-figured piece of flesh from putrifying, or give it the satisfaction of tasting meats and drinks that are grateful to it, for a few years? And if for a few, why not for many? And when those many were expired, why not for as many more? And the same reason always remaining, why not for always? The case is thus put, because the common meaning of this allegation, that nature regrets or abhors this dissolution, is not that they are concerned for their souls, how it may fare with them in another world, which the most little mind or trouble themselves about; but that they are to have what is grateful to them in this world. And was this the end a reasonable spirit was made for, when, without reason, sense were alike capable of the same sort of gratifications? What law, what equity, what rule of decency, can oblige the soul of a man, capable of the society and enjoyments of angels, to this piece of self-denial, for the sake of his incomparably baser body? Or can make it fit that the nobler and more excellent nature should be eternally subservient to the meaner and more ignoble? Especially, considering that if, according to the case supposed, the two last foregoing directions be complied with, there is a sort of divine nature superadded to the whole human nature, that cannot but prompt the soul ennobled by it, to aspire to suitable, even to the highest, operations and enjoyments whereof it is capable, and which are not attainable in this present bodily state.

And if there were still a dispute between nature and nature, it is enough that the great Lord of *hades*, and of this present sensible world too, will determine it. In a far lower instance, when the general of an army commands it upon an enterprise wherein life is to be hazarded, it would be an ill excuse of a cowardly declining, to say, their nature regrets and dreads the adventure. The thing is necessary. Against what is so unavoidable as death, that is an abject mind that reluctates.*

Come, then, let us embolden ourselves; and, when he brings the key, dare to die. It is to obey and enjoy him, who is our life and our all. Say we cheerfully each of us, Lord Jesus receive my spirit; into thy hands I commit it, who hast redeemed it.

8. *Let us quietly submit to divine disposal, when our dear*

* Miser est quicunque non vult, mundo secum moriente, mori.—*Sen. Tr.*

friends and relatives are by death taken away from us. For consider into what hands this affair is put, of ordering every one's decease and removal out of this into the other world, and who hath these keys. It is such a one, whose right, if we use our thoughts, we shall not allow ourselves to dispute; or to censure his administration. His original right, is that of a Creator and a God. "For all things were created for him, and by him." Col. i. 16. "And without him was nothing made that was made." John i. 3. "The first and the last" to all things. Rev. i. 17.

His supervening right was that of a Redeemer, as hath been already noted from this context, and as such he had it by acquisition, dying to obtain it, and overcoming death! "I am he that liveth and was dead." And then, as he elsewhere declares, by constitution, "All power is given me both in heaven and on earth." Matt. xxviii. 18. The word (ἐξουσία) imports *rightful power.* And who are we, or any relatives of ours, whom all the power of heaven and earth hath no right to touch? What exempt jurisdiction can we pretend ourselves to belong unto?

Or will we adventure to say, not denying his right, He did not use it well in this case? Who is more fitly qualified to judge than he that hath these keys? And let this matter be yet more thoroughly discussed. What is it that we find fault with in the removal of this or that person, that was near, and delightful to us? Is it that he was to die at all? Or that he died so soon? If we say the former; do we blame the constitution appointing all men once to die, by which this world is made a portal to another for all men, and whence it was necessary none should stay long in this, but only pass through, into that world wherein every one is to have his everlasting abode? Or is it that, when we think it not unfit this should be the general and common course, there should yet have been a particular dispensation for this friend or relation of mine?

Let the former be supposed the thing we quarrel at; and consider the intolerable consequences of the matter being otherwise, as the case is with this apostate, sinful world: such as, upon second, better weighed thoughts, we would abhor to admit into our minds, even as the matter of a wish. What! would we wish to mankind a sinning immortality on this earth, before which a wise heathen* professed to prefer one day virtuously spent. Would we wish this world to be the everlasting stage of indignities and affronts to him that made it? Would we wish there should never be a judgment-day, and that all the wise and righteous counsels of Heaven should be transversed and overturned, only to comport with our terrene

* Cicero.

and sensual inclinations? Is this our dutifulness and loyal affection to our blessed Lord, the Author of our beings, and the God of our lives, whose rights and honours should be infinitely dearer to us than ourselves? Is it our kindness to ourselves, and all others of our kind and order, that are all naturally capable, and many by gracious vouchsafement, fitly qualified, to enjoy a perfect felicity in another world, that we would have all together confined for ever to this region of darkness, impurity, and misery?

Or if it displease us, that our relatives are not, by some special dispensation, excepted from the common law of mortality, we would surely as much have expected an exemption ourselves; otherwise our dying away from them would make the so much regretted separation, as well as theirs from us. And what then, if we were required to draw up our petition, to put it into express words, to turn our wish for ourselves, and all our relatives and peculiar friends, into a formed, solemn prayer, to this effect, that we are content the law stand in force, that all the world should die, with only the exception of some few names; *viz.* our own, and of our kindred and more inward friends? What ashamed, confounded creatures should we be upon the view of our own request! Should we not presently be for quelling and suppressing it, and easily yield to be nonsuited, without more ado? What pretence can we have not to think others as apt to make the same request for them and theirs? And if all the rest of the world shall die, would we and our friends dwell here alone, or would we have this world be continued habitable only on this private account, to gratify a family? And if we and our friends be holy, heavenly-minded persons, how unkind were it to wish to ourselves and them, when fit for the society of angels and blessed spirits above, a perpetual abode in this low earthly state! Would we not now, upon riper, second thoughts, rather be content that things should rest as they are, and he that hath these keys use them his own way.

But if by all this we are put quite out of conceit with the desire of a terrestrial immortality, all that the matter finally results into is, that we think such a relative of ours died too soon. We would not have coveted for him an eternity on earth, but only more time. And how much more? Or for what? If we were to set the time, it is like that when it comes we should be as averse to a separation, if co-existent then, as now; and so we revolve into the exploded desire of a terrestrial immortality back again at last. If we were to assign the reason of our desire, that would seem, as in the present case, a plausible one to some, which is mentioned by Plutarch in his consolation to Apollonius for the loss of his son, concerning another such case (as

he instances in many) of one Elysius an Italian, whose loss of his son Euthynous was much aggravated by this, that he was a great heir. But what was said to that, there, and what is further to be said to any thing of that kind, I shall reserve to a more proper place.

It is a more weighty allegation, and of more common concernment, when a useful person is gone, and one very capable of becoming very eminently so. And this requires deeper consideration, and sundry things ought to be considered, in order to the quieting their minds, who are apt to behold such darker dispensations, in the course of Providence, with amusement, and disturbance of spirit; *i. e.* when they see persons of excellent endowments, and external advantages beyond the most, cut off in their prime, while the world is cumbered with drones never likely to do good, and pestered with such as are like to prove plagues to it, and do great hurt and mischief to the age wherein they live; an ancient and not uncommon scruple to pious observers heretofore. "Wherefore," says holy Job, "do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight," (*ch.* xxi. 7, 8,) when his seed was cut off before his eyes. And here let us consider,—

(1.) That this world is in apostacy from God; and though he is pleased to use apt means for its recovery, he doth what he thinks fit herein of mere grace and favour, and is under no obligation to do all that he can. His dispensation herein must correspond to, and bear upon it, the impress of other divine perfections, his wisdom, holiness, justice, as well as grace. And for grace itself, whereas all since the apostacy lie together in a fearful gulph of impurity and misery; and some made more early sensible hereof than the most, do stretch out a craving hand, and cry for help;—if now a merciful hand reached down from heaven take hold of them, and pluck them sooner out; is this disagreeable to the God of all grace, to make some such instances, and vouchsafe them an earlier deliverance; though they might, being longer delayed, be someway helpful to others, that continue stupid and insensible?

(2.) When he hath done much, in an age still obstinately unreclaimable, he may be supposed to let one appear, only with a promising aspect, and in just displeasure presently withdraw him; that they may understand they have forfeited such a blessing to this or that country, as such a one might have proved.

(3.) This may awaken some, the more to prize and improve the encouragements they may have from such as remain, or shall spring up in their stead who are gone, and to bless God that the weight of his interest, and of the cause of religion, doth not hang and depend upon the slender thread of this man's

life. "The God of the spirits of all flesh" can raise up instruments as he pleases; and will, to serve his own purposes, though not ours.

(4.) He will have it known, that though he uses instruments, he needs them not. It is a piece of divine royalty and magnificence, that when he hath prepared and polished such a utensil, so as to be capable of great service, he can lay it by without loss.

(5.) They that are most qualified to be of greatest use in this world, are thereby also the more capable of blessedness in the other. It is owing to his most munificent bounty, that he may vouchsafe to reward sincere intentions as highly as great services. He took David's having it in his heart to build him a house, as kindly as Solomon's building him one: and as much magnifies himself in testifying his acceptance of such as he discharges from his service here, at the third hour, as of them whom he engages not in it till the eleventh.

(6.) Of their early piety he makes great present use in this world, testifying his acceptance of their works, generally in his word, and particularly by the reputation he procures to them in the minds and consciences of such as were best able to judge, and even of all that knew them; which may be truly accounted a divine testimony, both in respect of the object, which hath on it a divine impress, and speaks the self-recommending power of true goodness, which is the image of God; and in respect of the subject, shows the dominion God hath over minds, engaging not only good men to behold with complacency such pleasant, blooming goodness, correspondent to their own; but even bad men to approve in these others, what they entertain not in themselves. "The same things are accepted with God, and approved of men." Rom. xiv. 18. "Thus being dead, they, as Abel, yet speak." Heb. xi. 4.

(7.) And it is a brighter and more unsullied testimony, which is left in the minds of men, concerning such very hopeful persons as die in their youth. They never were otherwise known, or can be remembered, than as excellent young persons. This is the only idea which remains of them. Had they lived longer, to the usual age of man, the remembrance of what they were in youth would have been in a great degree effaced and worn out by latter things; perhaps blackened, not by what were less commendable, but more ungrateful to the greater part, especially if they lived to come into public stations. Their just zeal and contestations against the wickedness of the age, might disoblige many, and create them enemies, who would make it their business to blast them, and cast upon their name and memory all the reproach they could invent. Whereas, the lustre of that virtue and piety which had provoked nobody, appears only with

an amiable look, and leaves behind nothing of such a person but a fair, unblemished, alluring, and instructive example; which they that observed them might, with less prejudiced minds, compare with the useless, vicious lives of many that they see to have filled up a room in the world, unto extreme old age, either to no purpose, or to very bad. And how vast is the difference in respect of usefulness to the world, between a pious young gentleman dying in his youth, that lived long in a little time, untainted by youthful lusts and vanities, and victorious over them, and an accursed sinner of an hundred years old, (Isa. lxv. 20;) one that was an infant of days, and though an hundred years old, yet still a child, that had not filled up his days with any thing of real value or profit to himself or others: (so some very judicious expositors understand that text) that (as he aptly speaks)* *had nothing besides grey hairs and wrinkles, to make him be thought a long liver;* but who might truly be said not to have *lived* long, but only to have *been* long, in the world. How sweet and fragrant a memory doth the one, how rotten and stinking a name doth the other, leave behind him to survivors!

Therefore such very valuable young persons as are taken hence in the flower of their age, are not to be thought, upon that account, of usefulness to this world, to have lived in it that shorter time in vain.

They leave behind them that testimony which will turn to account, both for the glory of God's grace, which he hath exemplified in them, and which may be improved to the good of many who shall have seen that a holy life, amidst the temptations that the youthful age is exposed to, is no impracticable thing; and that an early death is as possible also to themselves.

But besides their no little usefulness in this world, which they leave, we must know,—

(8.) That the affairs and concernments of the other world, whither they go, are incomparably greater every way, and much more considerable. And to this most unquestionable maxim must be our last and final resort, in the present case. All the perturbation and discomposure of mind which we suffer upon any such occasion, arises chiefly from our having too high and great thoughts of this world, and too low and diminishing thoughts of the other; and the evil must be remedied by rectifying our apprehensions in this matter. Because that other world is *hades*, unseen, and not within the verge of our sense, our sensual minds are prone to make of it a very little thing, and even next to nothing, as too many will have it to be quite nothing at all. We are concerned, in duty to our blessed Redeemer and Lord, and for his just honour, to magnify this his prefecture,

* Non est quod quenquam propter canos aut rugas, putes, diu vixisse. Non ille diu vixit, sed diu fuit.—*Sen.*

and render it as great to ourselves as the matter requires, and as our very narrow minds can admit: and should labour to correct it as a great and too common fault, a very gross, vulgar error, to conceive of persons leaving this world of ours, as if they hereby became useless; and, upon the matter, lost out of the creation of God. So is our fancy prepossessed and filled with delusive images, that throng in upon it through our unwary senses, that we imagine this little spot of our earth to be the only place of business, and all the rest of the creation to be mere vacuity, vast empty space, where there is nothing to do, and nothing to be enjoyed. Not that these are formed, positive thoughts, or a settled judgment, with good men; but they are floating imaginations, so continually obtruded upon them, from (what lies next) the objects of sense, that they have more influence to affect the heart, and infer unsuitable, sudden, and indeliberate emotions of spirit, than the most formed judgment, grounded on things that lie without the sphere of sense, can outweigh.

And hence, when a good man dies, elder or younger, the common cry is, among the better sort, (for the other do less concern themselves,) "O what a loss is this! Not to be repaired! not to be borne!" Indeed this is better than the common stupidity, not to consider, not "to take it to heart, when the righteous man perisheth, or is taken away:" and the law of our own nature obliges and prompts us to feel and regret the losses which afflict us: but such resentments ought to be followed and qualified by greater thoughts, arising from a superior nature, that ought presently to take place with us, of the nobler employments which God calls such unto, "of whom this world was not worthy." Heb. xi. 38. And how highly his great and all-comprehending interest is to be preferred before our own, or the interest of this or that family, country, or nation, on earth!

And, at once, both to enlarge and quiet our minds on such occasions, we should particularly consider,—

[1.] The vast amplitude of the heavenly *hades*, in comparison of our minute spot of earth, or of that dark region, wheresoever it is, reserved for the just punishment of delinquents, according to such intimations as the holy Scriptures give us hereof; which being written only for the use of us on earth, cannot be supposed to intend the giving us more distinct accounts of the state of things in the upper world, than were necessary for us in this our present state.

But it is no obscure hint that is given of the spaciousness of the heavenly regions, when, purposely to represent the divine immensity, it is said of the unconfined presence of the great God, that even heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain him. 1 Kings viii. 27; 2 Chron. vi. 18. How vast scope

is given to our thinking minds, to conceive heavens above heavens, encircling one another, till we have quite tired our faculty, and yet we know not how far short we are of the utmost verge! And when our Lord is said to have "ascended far above all heavens," (Eph. iv. 10,) whose arithmetic will suffice to tell how many they are,—whose uranography to describe how far that is?

We need not impose it upon ourselves to judge their rules infallible, who, being of no mean understanding, nor indiligent in their inquiries, have thought it not improbable that there may be fixed stars within view, at that distance from our earth, that if moveable in as swift motion as that of a bullet shot from a cannon, would be fifty thousand years in passing from one to the other. * But how much remoter that star may be from the utmost verge of the universe, is left altogether unimaginable. I have been told, that a very ingenious artist going about, in exact proportions, to describe the orb or vortex to which our sun belongs, on as large a table as could be convenient for him to work upon, was at a loss to find a spot not too big, in proportion, for our earth, and big enough, whereupon to place the point, made very fine, of one foot of his compasses.

If any suspect extravagancy in our modern computations, let him take a view of what is discoursed to this purpose by a writer of most unexceptionable wisdom and sobriety, as well as most eminent sanctity, in his time. †

Now when the Lord of this vast universe beheld upon this little spot intelligent creatures in transgression and misery; that he did so compassionately concern himself for the recovery of such as should, by apt methods, be induced to comply with his merciful design; and appoint his own eternal Son to be their Redeemer, in order whereto, as he was God with God, he must also become Man among men, one of themselves; and so, as God-man, for his kindness to some, be constituted universal Lord of all:—shall mere pity towards this world greaten it above the other?

* Computation by the Hon. Francis Roberts, Esq. Philosophical Transactions for the months March and April, 1694.

† Boston, in his *Four Last Things*, who, speaking of heaven, directs us to guess the immeasurable magnitude of it, (as otherwise——so) by the incredible distance from the earth to the starry firmament; and adds, "If I should here tell you the several computations of astronomers, in this kind, the sums would seem to exceed all possibility of belief." And he annexes in his margin sundry computations which I shall not here recite; you may find them in the author himself, p. 21. And yet besides, as he further adds, the late most learned of them place above the eighth sphere, wherein all those glorious lamps shine so bright, three moving orbs more. Now the empyrean heaven comprehends all these; how incomprehensible, then, must its compass and greatness necessarily be! But he supposes it possible, the adventure of mathematicians may be too audacious and peremptory, &c. and concludes the height and extent of the heavens to be beyond all human investigation.

But we are not left without ground to apprehend a more immediate reason for his being, as Redeemer, made Head and Lord of all those creatures that were the original inhabitants of the invisible world. For when it had been said, (Col. i. 16,) that all things were created by him, not only the visible things on earth, but the invisible things in heaven, here is a regression to these latter, who were before, for their greater dignity, generally first mentioned, and now some enumeration given of them, "whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers," and "all things" again repeated, that these might appear expressly included; said over again to be created by him, and for him, which was sufficient to express his creative right in them. It is presently subjoined, (*v.* 17,) "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." All owe their stability to him; *viz.* the mentioned thrones, dominions, &c. as well as other things. But how? or upon what terms? That we might understand his redemptory right was not here to be overlooked, it is shortly after added, "And having made peace by the blood of his cross, it pleased the Father, (to be repeated out of what went before) by him to reconcile all things to himself;" and this *by him*, iterated; *q. d.* "By him, shedding his blood on the cross, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven;" lest the thrones, dominions, &c. mentioned before, should be forgot. And a word is used accommodable enough to the several purposes before expressed, ἀποκαταλλάξαι, which doth not always suppose enmity, but more generally signifies, upon a sort of commutation, or valuable consideration, to procure, or conciliate, or make a thing more firmly one's own, or assure it to himself; though it is afterwards used in the stricter sense, *v.* 21.

I have often considered with wonder and pleasure, that whereas God is called by that higher and far more extensive name, "the Father of spirits," he is also pleased so graciously to vouchsafe, as to be styled "the God of the spirits of all flesh;" and thereby to signify, that having an order of spirits so meanly lodged, that inhabit frail and mortal flesh, though he have a world of spirits to converse with, whose dwelling is not with flesh, yet he disdains not a relation to so mean and abject spirits, his offspring, also, in our world: and that, because this was the place of offending delinquents that he would recover, the Redeemer should sort himself with them, and, as they were partakers of flesh and blood, himself likewise take part of the same! This was great and Godlike, and speaks the largeness and amplitude of an all-comprehending mind, common to Father and Son, and capable of so applying itself to the greatest things, as not to neglect the least: and, therefore, so much the

more magnifies God and our Redeemer, by how much the less considerable we and our world are. But that hence we should so over-magnify this world, as if nothing were considerable that lies without its compass, is most perversely to misconstrue the most amazing condescension.

The Spirit of God, by holy David, teaches us to reason the quite contrary way: and from the consideration he had of the vastness and splendour of the upper world, of the heavens, the moon and stars, &c. not to magnify, but diminish our world of mankind, and say, What is man!

And let us further consider,—

[2.] The inexpressible numerousness of the other world's inhabitants, with the excellencies wherein they shine, and the orders they are ranked into, and how unlikely it is that holy souls that go thither should want employment. Great concourse and multitudes of people make places of business in this world; and must much more do so, where creatures of the most spiritual and active natures must be supposed to have their residence. Scripture speaks of *myriads*, which we read, *an innumerable company*, of angels, besides all the spirits of just men, (Heb. xii.;) who are sometimes said to be more than *any one*—οὐδεὶς, which we causelessly render *man*, could number. Rev. vii. And when we are told of many heavens, above all which our Lord Jesus is said to have ascended, are all those heavens only empty solitudes, uninhabited, glorious deserts? When we find how full of vitality this base earth of ours is; how replenished with living creatures, not only on the surface, but within it, how unreasonable is it to suppose the nobler parts of the universe to be less peopled with inhabitants, of proportionable spirituality, activity, liveliness, and vigour, to the several regions, which, the remoter they are from dull earth, must be supposed still the finer, and apt to afford fit and suitable habitations to such creatures! Whether we suppose pure, unclothed spirits to be the natives in all those heavens, all comprehended under the one name of *angels;* or whether, as some think of all created spirits, that they have all vital union with some or other vehicles, ethereal or celestial, more or less fine and pure, as the region is to which they belong, having gradually associated unto them the spirits of holy men gone from us, which are said to be ἰσάγγελοι—"angels' fellows," (Luke xx. 36,) it is indifferent to our purpose.

Let us only consider them all as intelligent, spiritual beings, full of holy light, life, active power, and love to their common Lord and one another. And can we imagine their state to be a state of torpid silence, idleness, and inactivity, or that they have not much higher and nobler work to do *there*, than

they can have in such a world as this, or in such bodies as *here* they lug to and fro?

And the Scriptures are not altogether silent, concerning the distinct orders of those glorious creatures that inhabit all the heavens which this upper *hades* must be understood to contain; though it hath not provided to gratify any one's curiosity, so far as to give us particular accounts of their differences and distinctions. And though we are not warranted to believe such conjectures concerning them as we find in the supposititious Dionysius's *Celestial Hierarchy*, or much less the idler dreams of Valentinus and the Gnostics about their *Æones*, with divers more such fictions; yet we are not to neglect what God hath expressly told us, *viz.* That, giving us some account of the creation in the *hades*, or the invisible part of it, there are thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, angels, (and, elsewhere, archangels,) authorities, (Col. i. 16, with 1 Peter iii. 21;) which, being terms that import order and government, can scarce allow us not to conceive, that of all those numberless multitudes of glorious creatures that replenish and people those spacious regions of light and bliss, there are none who belong not to some or other of those principalities and dominions.

Whence, therefore, nothing is more obvious than to conceive, that whosoever is adjoined to them, ascending out of our world, presently hath his station assigned him, is made to know his post, and how he is to be employed, in the service and adoration of the sovereign Lord of all, and in paying the most regular homage to the throne of God and the Lamb: it being still to be remembered, that God is not worshipped there, or here, as an ἐνδεὴς, or "as though he needed any thing, since he gives to all breath and being, and all things," (Acts xvii.) but that the felicity of his most excellent creatures doth in great part consist in acting perpetually according to the dictate of a just and right mind; and that, therefore, they take highest pleasure in prostration, in casting down their crowns, in shrinking even into nothing, before the original, eternal, subsistent Being, that he may be owned as the All in all, because they follow, herein, a most satisfied judgment, and express it when they say, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created." Rev. iv. 11. "And worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive riches, and wisdom, and strength," &c. *ch.* v. 12.

And they that rest not night or day from such high and glorious employments, have they nothing to do? Or will we say or think,—because we see not how the heavenly potentates lead on their bright legions, to present themselves before the throne, to tender their obeisance, or receive commands and despatches

to this or that far remote dynasty; or suppose to such and such a mighty star, (whereof there are so numberless myriads; and why should we suppose them not replenished with glorious inhabitants?) whither they fly as quick as thought, with joyful speed, under the all-seeing Eye, glad to execute wise and just commands upon all occasions:—but, alas! in all this we can but darken counsel with words without knowledge; we cannot pretend to knowledge in these things. Yet if from Scripture intimations, and the concurrent reason of things, we only make suppositions of what may be, not conclusions of what is, let our thoughts ascend as much higher as they can; I see not why they should fall lower than all this: and because we cannot be positive, will we, therefore, say or think—there can be no such thing, or nothing but dull inactivity, in those regions? Because that other world is *hades*, and we see nothing, shall we make little or next to nothing of it? We should think it very absurd reasoning, (if we should use it in reference to such mean trifles in comparison, and say,) There is no such thing as pomp and state, no such thing as action or business, in the court of Spain or France, of Persia or Japan, because no sound from thence strikes our ear, or the beams of majesty there dazzle not our eye.

I should indeed think it very unreasonable to make mere magnitude, or vast extent of space, filled up with nothing but void air, ether, or other fine matter, (call it by what name you will,) alone, or by itself, a very considerable note of excellency of the other invisible world, above this visible world of ours. But I reckon it much more unreasonable and unenforced, (to say no more,) by any principles, either of philosophy or religion, finding this world of ours, a baser part of the creation, so full of life, and of living inhabitants, of one degree or another; to suppose the nobler parts of the universe, still ascending upwards, generally unpeopled and desert, when it is so conceivable in itself, and so aptly tending to magnify our Creator and Redeemer, that all the upper regions be fully inhabited with intelligent creatures; whether mere spirits, unclothed with any thing material, or united with some or other matter, we need not determine.

And whereas Scripture plainly intimates, that the apostate revolted spirits that fell from God, and kept not their first stations, were vastly numerous; we have hence scope enough for our thoughts to conceive, that so spacious regions being replenished with intelligent creatures, always innocent and happy, the delinquents, compared with them, may be as despicable for their paucity, as they are detestable for their apostacy: and that the horrid *hades*, wherein they are reserved to the blackness of darkness for ever, may be no more in proportion, nay, inexpressibly less, than some little rocky island, appointed

as a place of punishment for criminals, in comparison, of a flourishing vast empire, fully peopled with industrious, rich, sober-minded, and happy inhabitants.—We might further consider,

[3.] The high perfection they presently attain to, who are removed, though in their younger years, out of this into that other world.

The spirits of just men are there said to be made perfect. Waiving the Olympic metaphor, which is, at most, but the thing signifying; that which is signified, cannot be less than the concurrence of natural and moral perfection: the perfecting of all our faculties, mind, will, and active power, and of all holy and gracious excellencies, knowledge, wisdom, love, holiness. The apostle makes the difference be, as that of a child, and that of a man. (1 Cor. xiii.) And would any one that hath a child he delights in, wish him to be a child always, and only capable of childish things? Or is it a reasonable imagination, that by how much we are more capable of action, we shall be the more useless, and have the less to do?

We may further, lastly, add, that which is not the least considerable,

[4.] That all the active services and usefulness we are capable of in this world, are but transitory, and lie within the compass of this temporary state of things, which must have an end. Whereas the business of the other world belongs to our final and eternal state, which shall never be at an end. The most extraordinary qualifications for service on earth, must hereafter, if not by the cessation of the active powers and principles themselves, as tongues, prophecies, and such knowledge as is uncommon, and by peculiar vouchsafement afforded but to a few, for the help of many; these endowments, designed for the propagation of the Christian faith, and for the stopping the mouths of gainsayers, must in the use and exercise, at least, by the cessation of the objects and occasions, fail, and cease, and vanish away. (1 Cor. xiii. 8.) The like may be said of courage and fortitude to contend against prevailing wickedness; skill, ability, with external advantages, to promote the impugned interest of Christ, and Christian religion; of all these there will be no further use in that other world. They are all to be considered as means to the end. But how absurd were it to reckon the means of greater importance than the end itself! The whole present constitution of Christ's kingdom on earth, is but preparatory and introductive to the celestial kingdom. And how absurd were it to prefer this temporary kingdom to the eternal one, and present serviceableness to this, to perpetual service in the other!

It is true, that service to God and our Redeemer in this present state, is necessary in its own kind, highly acceptable to

God, and justly much valued by good men. And we ought ourselves willingly to submit to serve God in a meaner capacity in this world, while it is his pleasure we shall do so; especially if God should have given any signification of his mind concerning our abode in the flesh some longer time, as it is likely he had done to the apostle Paul, (Phil. i. 24,) because he says, he was confident, and did know that so it should be, (*v.* 25,) we should be abundantly satisfied with it, as he was. But to suppose an abode here to be simply and universally more eligible, is very groundless and unreasonable; and were a like case, as if a person of very extraordinary abilities and accomplishments, because he was useful in some obscure country village, is to be looked upon as lost, because his prince, being informed of his great worth, calls him up to his court, and finding him every way fit, employs him in the greatest affairs of state!

To sum up this matter: whereas the means are always, according to usual estimate, wont to derive their value from their end; time, from eternity; this judgment of the case, that usefulness in this present state is of greater consequence and more important than the affairs of the other world, breaks all measures, overturns the whole frame, and inverts the order of things: makes the means more valuable than the end; time more considerable than eternity; and the concernments of a state that will soon be over, greater than those of our fixed, permanent, everlasting state, that will never be over.

If we would allow ourselves the liberty of reasoning according to the measure and compass of our narrow minds, biassed and contracted by private interest and inclination, we should have the like plausible things to think concerning such of ours as die in infancy, and that when they have but newly looked into this world, are presently again caught out of it; that if they had lived, what might they have come to! How pleasant and diverting might their childhood have been! How hopeful their youth! How useful their riper age! But these are commonly thoughts little wiser than theirs, and proceed from a general infidelity, or misbelief, that whatsoever is not within the compass of this little, sorry world, is all emptiness and nullity! Or, if such be pious and more considering, it is too plain they do not, however, consider enough, how great a part it is of divine magnificence, to take a reasonable immortal spirit from animating a piece of well-figured clay, and presently adjoin it to the general assembly above! How glorious a change is made upon their child in a moment! How much greater a thing it is to be adoring God above, in the society of angels, than to be dandled on their knee, or enjoy the best provisions they can make for them on earth! That they have a part to act upon an eternal stage! and though they are but lately come into being, are never

to go out of being more, but to be everlasting monuments and instruments of the glory of their great Creator and Lord!

Nor, perhaps, is it considered so deeply as it ought, that it hath seemed meet to the supreme Wisdom, upon a most important reason, in the case of lengthening or shortening the lives of men, not ordinarily, or otherwise than upon a great occasion, to interrupt the tendencies of natural causes; but let nature run its course: for otherwise, very frequent innovations upon nature would make miracles cheap and common, and consequently useless to their proper, great ends; which may be of greater significancy in the course of God's government over the world, than some addition to this or that life can be worth. And, therefore, this consideration should repress our wonderment, why God doth not, when he so easily can, by one touch upon this or that second cause, prevent or ease the grievous pains which they often suffer that love him, and whom he loves. He reckons it fitter, and they will in due time reckon so too themselves, when the wise methods of his government come to be unfolded and understood, that we should any of us bear what is ungrateful to us, in point of pain, loss of friends, or other unpleasing events of Providence, than that he should make frequent and less necessary breaches upon the common order and course of government which he hath established over a delinquent, sinful world.

Whereupon, it is a great piece of wisdom and dutifulness towards our great Lord, not to pray absolutely, peremptorily, or otherwise than with great submission and deference to his wise and holy pleasure, for our own or our friends' lives, ease, outward prosperity, or any external or temporary good thing. For things that concern our spiritual and eternal welfare, his good and acceptable will is more expressly declared, and made known already and beforehand. But as to the particular case of the usefulness of any friend or relative of ours in this or the other state, the matter must be finally left to the arbitrement and disposal of Him who hath the keys of *hades* and of death. And when by his turn of them he hath decided the matter, we then know what his mind and judgment are, which it is no more fit for us to censure, than possible to disannul. Whatever great purposes we might think one cut off in the flower of his age capable of serving in this world, we may be sure he judged him capable of serving greater in the other.

And now by this time I believe you will expect to have somewhat a more particular account of this excellent young gentleman, whose early decease hath occasioned my discoursing so largely on this subject: not more largely than the importance, but much less accurately than the dignity, of it did challenge.

He was the eldest son of Sir Charles Hoghton, of Hoghton

Tower, in the county of Lancaster, Baronet, and of the Lady Mary, daughter of the late Lord Viscount Masserene, his very pious consort: a family of eminent note in that northern part of the kingdom, for its antiquity, opulency, and interest in the country where it is seated; and which hath intermarried with some or other of the nobility, one generation after another: but hath been most of all considerable and illustrious, as having been itself, long, the immemorial, known seat of religion, sobriety, and good order, from father to son; giving example, countenance, and patronage, to these praiseworthy things to the country round about: and wherein, hitherto, through the singular favour and blessing of Heaven, there hath not been that visible degeneracy that might be so plainly observed, and sadly deplored, in divers great families. As if it were an exemption from what was so anciently remarked by the poet, *Ætas parentum, pejor avis, &c.*—but, on the contrary, such as have succeeded, have, by a laudable ambition and emulation, as it were, striven to outshine such as have gone before them, in piety and virtue.

In this bright and lucid tract and line, was this most hopeful young gentleman, now arrived to the age wherein we use to write man, beginning to stand up in view, and to draw the eyes and raise the hopes of observers and well-wishers, as not likely to come short of any of his worthy ancestors and predecessors. But Heaven had its eye upon him too, and both made and judged him meet for an earlier translation, to a more eminent station there.

He was from his childhood observed to be, above the common rate, docile, of quick apprehension, solid judgment, and retentive memory; and, betimes, a lover of books and learning.

For religion, his knowledge of the principles of it continually grew, as his capacity did more and more admit, under the eye and endeavours of his parents, and such other instructors as they took care he should never want. But his savour and relish thereof, and the impression made thereby upon his soul, was so deep, and so early, as to be apparently owing to a higher cause, the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, and a singular blessing thereby upon his pious education. And in this way, it could not be easy, to such as were his most diligent and constant observers, to conclude or conjecture when God first began to deal with his spirit.

Above ten years ago, I had opportunity, for a few days, to have some converse with him in his father's house: and, as I could then perceive, his spirit was much tinctured with religion; so I received information, that for a considerable time before, there constantly appeared in him such *specimina* of serious piety, as were very comfortable to his parents, and might be instructive to others that took notice of them.

In the course of divers following years, he greatly improved,

under domestic and private instruction, both in grammar-learning and academical studies, for which he wanted not apt helps. When there was great reason to hope he was so well established in religion and virtue as neither to be shocked by the importunate temptations of a sceptical vicious age in the general, nor betrayed by the facility of his own youthful age, his prudent, worthy father, judged it requisite, and not unsafe, to adventure him into a place of more hazard, but greater advantage for his accomplishment in that sort of culture and polishing that might, in due time, render him both in reality, and with better reputation, serviceable in a public station; *i.e.* where he might gain such knowledge of the world, of men, and of the laws of his country, as was proper for his rank, and one that was to make such a figure in the nation, as it was to be hoped he might; and upon that account, not yet a year ago, brought him up to London, entered him in the Temple, took for him convenient lodgings there, and left him settled, unto mutual satisfaction.

He was little diverted by the noise, novelties, or the gaieties of the town, but soon betook himself to a course of close study; discontinued not his converse with God, and thereby learned, and was enabled, to converse with men warily and with caution, so as he might be continually improving and gaining good, without doing or receiving hurt.

The substance of the following account I received from a pious intelligent young man, who several years attended him before his coming to town, and afterwards, to the finishing of his course.

"Mr. Hoghton's early seriousness increased with his years. His deportment was grave, composed, without any appearance of pride, which he carefully avoided. His diligence in study was unusual, and his proficiency very great; neither was this less an effect of his conscientiousness in the improvement of his time, than of his desire after knowledge.

"As to his demeanour and performance of duties towards his several relations, his self-denial, his sedateness of mind, his fear of sin, his tenderness of conscience, love of the best things, and unconcernedness about things of an inferior nature, so far as hath fallen under my observation, in near six years' time, I believe few, if any, of his years, did exceed him.

"In his sickness he was very patient, submissively undergoing those heavy strokes it pleased God to lay upon him.

"Upon his apprehension of death, he seemed very little discouraged, but quietly resigned himself into the hands of the all-wise Disposer of all things.

"Some time before his sickness, and in the time of it, he said, —afflictions were very proper for God's children; and those that

were never afflicted had reason to question the truth of their grace, and God's love to them; quoting that Scripture, 'If ye are without chastening, then are ye bastards, and not sons.'

"He often repeated those words in the beginning of his illness: 'It is a hard thing to make our calling and our election sure.'—'I desire to glorify God.'

"When he understood, from some expressions of his physician, how dangerous his distemper was, he said, he knew very well the meaning of his physician's words; but that however it proved, he hoped he was safe.

"He was so strict in the observation of the Lord's day, that if he happened to lie longer than ordinary in the morning, he would continue the later in duties in the evening; saying, we ought not to make that day shorter than other days.

"Though he was very intent on his studies, yet on Saturdays he always broke them off at noon, and spent the afternoon in reading divinity, and preparing himself for the Lord's day.

"He was always constant in his secret duties, and suffered nothing to hinder him from the performing of them.

"Before he expired, he spoke with great assurance of his future happiness, and hopes of meeting his relations in glory." Thus far goes that account.

His sickness was short. When, hearing of it, I went to visit him, I was met in an ante-chamber, by his ingenious, dear brother, to whom it is no reproach to be second to him, and who, it is to be hoped, will be at least truly so; making him, though a fair example, yet not a standard; who has for divers years been most intimately conjunct and conversant with him, known his way, his spirit, his manner of life, his purity; and may be led on and excited thereby, wherein he hath observed him to excel others, to endeavour not to come short, but, if it were possible, to excel him; remembering, he is to be the next solace of his parents, hope of his family, and resort of his country, if God shall vouchsafe to continue him, in succeeding time.

From him, I had little expectation of finding his sick brother in a conversable condition, the malignity of his fever having before seized his head, and very much disordered his intellects; but going in, I was much surprised to find it so far otherwise. He presently knew me, and his understanding, that served him for little else, failed him not in the concernments of religion and of his soul. There was not an improper or misplaced word, though the case could not admit of interchanging many, that came from him. Concerning the substance of the gospel of Christ, as it could be shortly summed up to him, he said, he had no doubt. And his transactions with Christ himself, accepting him, resigning and entrusting himself absolutely and entirely to him, and God in him, were so explicit, distinct, and clear, as

could leave no place of doubt concerning him. He professed his concurrence to such requests as were put up to God concerning him, and the next morning slept quietly in the Lord.

Nor now will it be unfit to shut up the discourse with some few suitable reflections upon this double subject: the *text*, and *this providence*, taken together.

1. How happy is it, when this power of our great Redeemer and Lord, mentioned in the text, and a preparation, with cheerful willingness, dutifully to comport with it, concur and meet together, as they have done in this instance! Our Lord hath shown his power: he *asserted* it, in the text: in this instance he *used* it; giving an open testimony that he takes it to belong to him, to make such translations from one world to another, whensoever he judges it a fit season; nor is solicitous whether men acknowledge his right so to do, or no; or what censures they will pass upon what he hath done. He does his own work, and leaves men to their own talk, or mutterings, or wonder or amusement at it, as they will. So it becomes sovereign power to do, established upon the most unquestionable foundations, exercised according to the wisest and most righteous measures. He hath used his own right, and satisfied himself in the use of it. He thought not himself concerned to advise with any of us about it, who, as his counsellor, should instruct him. Isa. xl. 13; Rom. xi. 34. He owes so much to himself, to act as accountable to no one, nor liable to any one's control.

Here is most rightful, resistless power, justly and kindly used on the one hand; and, on the other, how placid, how calm a resignation! Here was no striving, no crying, no reluctant motion, no querulous, repining voice; nothing but peaceful, filial submission; a willingness to obey the summons given.

This was a happy accord, the willingness of this departing soul; proceeding not from stupidity, but trust in him who kept these keys, and such preparedness for removal, as the gospel required. O happy souls! that, finding the key is turning, and opening the door for them, are willing to go forth upon such terms, as "knowing whom they have believed," &c. and that neither "principalities or powers, life or death, &c. can ever separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus their Lord." Life, they find, hath not separated, whereof was the greater danger; and death is so far from making this separation, that it shall complete their union with the blessed God in Christ, and lay them enfolded in the everlasting embraces of divine love! Happy they that can hereupon welcome death, and say, "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace!" that before only desired leave to die, and have now obtained it; that are, with certainty of the issue, at the point of becoming complete victors over the last enemy, and are ready to enter upon their triumph,

and take up their ἐπινίκιον, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord." Happy soul! here will be a speedy end of all thy griefs and sorrows; they will be presently swallowed up in an absolute plenitude and fulness of joy. There is already an end put to thy tormenting cares and fears; for what object can remain to thee of a rational fear, when once, upon grounds such as shake not under thee, thou art reconciled to death? This is the most glorious sort of victory, *viz.* by *reconciliation.* For so, thou hast conquered, not the enemy only, but the enmity itself, by which he was so. Death is become thy friend, and so no longer to be feared; nor is there any thing else, from whence thou art to fear hurt; for death was thy last enemy, even this bodily death. The whole region beyond it is, to one in thy case, clear and serene, when to others is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. There are no terrible ὑστερήματα, no formidable consequences, no reserves of misery, no treasures of wrath to be feared by thee. To one in thy condition, may that, without hesitation, be applied, *Nihil metuit, qui optat mori;* "He fears nothing, who desires to die."—*Sen. Tr.* What is the product of some men's infidelity, is the genuine product of their faith. From so contrary causes may proceed the same effect. The effect, a willingness to die, or a bold adventure upon death, is the same, but only in respect of the general kind; with great differences in the special kind, according to the difference and contrariety of the causes, whereof they discernibly taste and savour. With *infidels,* it is a negative, dead, stupid, partial willingness, or but a non-aversion; and in a lower, and much diminished degree; or if some present, intolerable, disgraceful calamity urge them, a rash, obstinate, presumptuous rushing upon death; because they *do not consider consequences.* With *believers,* such as in reference to the concernments of the other world do walk by faith, while as yet they cannot walk by sight, in reference to those things, (2 Cor. v. 7,) it is a positive, vital, courage,(*v.* 8;) Θαῤῥοῦμεν, "We are confident;" and a preponderating inclination of will, "We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord;" because, as is manifest, they *do consider consequences,* and how blessed a state will certainly ensue! How vast are these special differences, of the same thing in the general, willingness to die!

O the transports of joy, that do now most rationally result from this state of the case, when there is nothing left lying between the dislodging soul, and the glorious unseen world, but only the dark passage of death; and that so little formidable, considering who hath the keys of the one and the other! How reasonable is it, upon the account of somewhat common herein

to the Redeemer and the redeemed, although every thing be not, to take up the following words that so plainly belong to this very case: "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in *sheol*, or *hades;* thou wilt not forsake or abandon it in that wide world, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life; the path that leads unto that presence of thine, where is fulness of joy, and to those pleasures which are at thy right hand or in thy power, and which are for evermore;" and shall never admit either of end, or diminution. Ps. xvi. 9—11.

Now, what do we mean, to let our souls hang in doubt? Why do we not drive things for them to an issue? Put them into those same safe hands that hold these keys; absolutely resign, devote, entrust, and subject them to him; get them bound up in the bundle of life; so adjoin and unite them to him, (not doubting but as we give them up, he will, and doth, in that instant, take hold of them, and receive them into union with himself,) as that we may assure our hearts, that because he lives, we shall live also. John xiv. 19. Thus the ground of our hope becomes sure, and of that joy which springs from such a hope. Rom. v. 2. Our life, we may now say, is "hid with Christ in God;" even though we are, in ourselves, dead, or dying creatures. Col. iii. 3. Yea, "Christ is our Life; and when he who is our Life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory." *v.* 4. He hath assured us, that because "he is the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in him, though he were dead, shall yet live:" and that "whosoever lives, and believes in him," hath thereby a life already begun in him, in respect whereof "he shall never die." John xi. 25, 26. What now can be surer than this? So far we are at a certainty, upon the included supposition, *i. e.* that we believe in him.

And what now remains to be ascertained? What? Only our own intervening death. We must, it is true, be absent from these bodies, or we cannot, as we would, be present with the Lord. And is that all? Can any thing now be more certain than that? O happy state of our case! How should our hearts spring and leap for joy, that our affairs are brought into this posture: that in order to our perfect blessedness, nothing is further wanting but to die; and that the certainty of death completes our assurance of it! What should now hinder our breaking forth into the most joyful thanksgivings, that it is so little doubtful we shall die; that we are in no danger of a terrestrial immortality; and that the only thing that it remained we should be assured of, is so very sure: that we are sure it is not in the power of all this world to keep us always in it; that the most spiteful enemy we have in all the world, cannot do us

that spite to keep us from dying! How gloriously may good men triumph over the impotent malice of their most mischievous enemies! *viz.* that the greatest mischief, even in their own account, that it can ever be in their power to do them, is to put it out of their own power ever to hurt them more; for they now go quite out of their reach. They can (being permitted) "kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." Luke xii. 4. What a remarkable, significant, *after that*, is this! what a defiance doth it import of the utmost effort of human power and spite, that here it terminates! It is now come to its *ne plus ultra!*

And so we are to look upon all our other trials and afflictions, that in any providential way may befall us: we may be sick, in pain, in poverty, in disgrace, but we shall not be always in mortal flesh, which is the *substratum* and the root of all the rest. Can we be upon better terms, having but two things to be concerned about, as necessary to our complete felicity,—union with Christ, and disunion from these bodies? God is graciously ready to assist us in reference to the former, though therein he requires our care, subserviently hereto: in reference to the latter, he will take care himself, in his own fit season, without any care or concern of ours in the matter; and only expects us to wait with patience, till that fit season come. And come it will, perhaps sooner than we may think. He doth not always go by our measures in judging of the fit season, as this present instance shows.

2. From the text, taken in conjunction with this act of Providence, we may observe the great advantage of a pious education. Though the best means of such education do not always prove effectual; yet this being much the more probable course, upon which to expect God's blessing, than the parents' profane negligence of the souls of their children, such an example, wherein God by his blessing testified his approbation of parental care and diligence, should greatly quicken the endeavours of parents herein; as hoping, hereby, to serve his great and merciful and most principal design, who hath these keys, and whose office it is to transmit souls, when they are prepared and ready, out of this world of ours, into that blessed, glorious world above. And though they may think themselves disappointed, when, through God's blessing upon their endeavours, they have educated one to such a pitch as this young gentleman was raised and brought up unto, with a prospect and hope of his having a long course of service to run through here on the earth; yet let parents hence learn to correct what was amiss, or what was wrong, not what was right and well. Their action and endeavour were, what ought to be; their error or mistake, if there were any, was more principally, as the case is

here stated, about their design and end. Not that they designed such an end, for that also was very justifiable and laudable: but if they designed it as their *more principal* end, which the case, as it is now put, supposes; that is, that they take themselves to be disappointed: for no man complains of it as a disappointment, if he miss of an inferior end, and attain that which is far nobler and more excellent. Our great aim should be, the subserving the design of the great Lord of heaven and earth, which ultimately and supremely refers to the heavenly, eternal state of things; and that souls may be ripened and fitted for that, and to do service here on earth, subordinately to the other, and while they are in preparation for the heavenly state. His principal design must be for that which is principal: and concerning that, as was formerly argued, there can be no more doubt, than whether heaven or earth, eternity or time, a fixed, permanent, everlasting, or a temporary, transitory, vanishing state of things, be more valuable, and to be preferred.

Our Redeemer hath acquired, and doth use these keys, for the translating of souls, as soon as he shall judge them "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of saints in light." Col. i. 12. Some he makes meet much earlier than others. His design, so far as it is known, or may be supposed, should give measure to ours; therefore ours must be to make them meet, as early as possible, for his purposes, as knowing it cannot be too early: they were devoted to him early, and pursuantly hereto, no time should be lost from the great business of fitting and forming them for him; inasmuch also, as the same qualifications, *viz.* that are of higher excellency and value, do equally prepare them to serve and glorify him, in either world, as he shall choose to dispose of them. And it unquestionably belongs to him to make his choice, as it does to us to endeavour to make them ready. If any of us have purposely educated a son for the service of his prince, and present him accordingly, we should submit it to his pleasure, to choose the station wherein he shall serve him; especially if he be a prince of celebrated wisdom and goodness. And should we complain, that he is put early into a station of much higher dignity than we thought of?

How little is this matter considered, by most, that go under the name of *Christian* parents; that are, more generally, very solicitous to have, as they call it, their children *christened;* but never have it in their thoughts to have them educated in the knowledge *of* Christ, or trained up *for* Christ. As if their baptism were intended for a mockery, their education, in the whole course of it, hath no such reference. It is how they may with better reputation bear up, not the name of Christ, but their own. Their aim looks no higher than that they may inherit their lands, maintain the honour of their families; appear, if

such be their own rank, well-accomplished gentlemen: and of some of those little things that are thought requisite hereto, we may say, as our Saviour did in another case, "These things ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other (the much greater things) undone."

What should hinder, but that learning to sing, or dance, or fence, or make a modish leg, might consist with learning to know God in Christ, in which knowledge stands eternal life? Whatsoever hath real excellency, or hath any thing in it of true ornament, will no way disagree with the most serious Christianity. And how lovely is the conjunction of the well-accomplished gentleman, and the serious Christian! Only sever inconsistencies, as how fashionably to curse, and swear, and damn, and debauch, which are thought to belong to good breeding in our age.

Let not religion, reason, shame, and common sense, be so totally abandoned all at once, as that the same persons shall take care to have their children baptized into Christ's name, and be taught to renounce, by their deeds, that great name, almost as soon as they can pronounce the word.

Where so direct a course is not taken to make those of the succeeding age ignominiously bad, yet how little is done towards the making of them truly and usefully good! Much care is taken to shape and adorn the outside of the man, how little to form and furnish their minds! Here, if they can be brought to make or judge of a verse, or a jest, or a piece of wit, it is a great attainment. Or if, at home, they can have them taught so much law as shall hereafter enable them to squeeze their tenants, and quarrel with their neighbours; or so much of behaviour as shall qualify them to keep gentlemen company; or if, as our pious poet phrased it, they ship them over, the thing is done: then they shall be able to talk a little of the fashions of this or that foreign country, and make much the better figure in their own.

But if, with all other parts of useful knowledge and good breeding that are thought requisite for this world, they be also well instructed touching their Redeemer's dominion over it, and the other world also; and concerning the nature, constitution, design, laws, and privileges of his kingdom; if it be seriously endeavoured to make them apt and prepared instruments of serving his interest here, as long as he shall please to continue them in any station on earth; and that they may also be made meet to be partakers, at length, of a far more excellent inheritance than an earthly parent could entitle them to, that of "the saints in light," (Col. i. 12;) if they can be fitted to stand in the presence of the eternal King, and to keep company with angels and blessed spirits above—how worthy and noble a design is

this! And with what satisfaction is it to be reflected on, if the parents have ground to apprehend they are herein neither unaccepted nor disappointed!

3. It is of ill presage to our land, that, when he that hath these keys uses them in the so early translation of so hopeful a person as this young gentleman was, so few such are observed to spring up for the support of the truly Christian interest in the succeeding generation. That the act of our great Redeemer and Lord herein was an act of wisdom and counsel, we cannot doubt. Against the righteousness of it, we can have no exception. The kind design of it towards them whom he so translates, is so evident in the visible agreement of their spirit and way with the heavenly state as their end, as puts that matter out of question. But we are so much the more to dread the consequences, and to apprehend what may make our hearts meditate terror.

By the Christian interest, I am far from meaning that of a party, but what every one must take for Christianity that will acknowledge there is any such thing. And for the support of that, in the most principal doctrines and laws of it, what is our prospect?

To go down here somewhat lower.

Let us suppose a rational susceptibleness, or capacity of religion, to be the difference of man; wherein the controversy may seem to admit of being compromised, whether it be religion alone, or reason alone, of which this must be said, that it distinguishes man from the inferior creatures. And let it be reason, with this addition, an aptness *suspicere numen*, to be impressed with some religious sentiment, or to conceive of, and adore, an original Being,—the wise and mighty Author and Cause of all things. And now, how near akin are religion and humanity.

Let us, next, understand Christianity to be the religion of fallen man, designing his recovery out of a lapsed and lost state; *i.e.* man having violated the law of his creation, and offended against the throne and government of his Creator, the supreme and universal Lord of all, it was reckoned not becoming so great a Majesty (though it was not intended to abandon the offenders to a universal ruin, without remedy) to be reconciled, otherwise than by a Mediator and a reconciling sacrifice. For which, none being found competent but the Eternal Son of God, the Brightness of his glory, and the express Image of his own person, who was also the First and the Last, the Lord God Almighty; and partaking with us of flesh and blood, was capable, and undertook to be both Mediator and Sacrifice; it seemed meet to the offended Majesty to vouchsafe pardon and eternal life, and renewing grace requisite thereto, to none of the

offenders, but through him; and accept from them no homage, but on his account: requiring, wheresoever the gospel comes, not only repentance towards God, but faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, as the summary of the counsel of God contained therein, (Acts xx. 21—27;) and that all should honour the Son, as He the Father requires to be honoured. John v. 23.

Whereas now so apt a course as this was established for restoring man to himself and to God, through the influence of the blessed Spirit, flowing in the gospel dispensation from Christ as the Fountain; what doth it portend when, amidst the clear light of the gospel, that affords so bright a discovery of the glorious Redeemer, and of all his apt methods for bringing to full effect his mighty work of redemption, an open war is commenced against him and his whole design, by persons, under seal, devoted to him? If there were but one single instance hereof in an age, who would not with trembling expect the issue? But when the genius of a Christian nation seems, in the rising generation, to be leading to a general apostacy from Christianity, in its principal and most substantial parts; and they are only patient of some external rituals, that belong, or are made appendant to it, so as but to endure them, either with reluctancy, or contempt: when the juvenile wit and courage which are thought to belong to a gentleman entering upon the stage of the world are employed in satirizing upon the religion into which they have been baptized; in bold efforts against the Lord that bought them! whither doth this tend?

Some would seem so modest, as in the midst of their profane oaths, and violations of the sacred name of God, to beg his pardon, and say, God forgive them: but so ludicrously, as he whom Cato animadverts upon, for begging pardon that he wrote in Greek, which he was unacquainted with, saying, he had rather ask pardon, than be innocent;* for what should induce him to do so unnecessary a thing, for which pardon should be necessary? These men think pardons very cheap things; but will God be mocked? Or doth he not observe? It is the prevailing atheistical spirit we are to dread, as that which may provoke jealousy, and to make himself known by the judgments he shall execute.

There is great reason to hope God will not finally abandon England. But is there not equal reason to fear, that before the day of mercy come, there may be a nearer day of wrath coming? A day that shall burn as an oven, and make the hemisphere about us a fiery vault! In our recovery from a lapsed state, which the religion professed among us aims at, there are two things to be effected; the restoring reason to its empire over the sensitive nature, that it may govern that; and the restoring

* Corn. Nep. Frag.

religion and love to God to its place and power, that he may govern us. While the former is not done, we remain sunk into the low level with the inferior creatures; and till the latter be effected, we are ranked with the apostate creatures that first fell from God. The sensuality of brutes, and the enmity of devils, rising and springing up observedly among us, import the directest hostility against the Redeemer's design. And them that bid this open defiance to him, he hath every moment at his mercy!

In the meantime, is this Immanuel's land? His right in us he will not disclaim. And because he claims it, we may expect him to vindicate himself. His present patience, we are to ascribe to the wisdom and greatness of an all-comprehending mind. He counts not a heap of impotent worms his match! But when the besom of destruction comes, one stroke of it will sweep away multitudes: then contempt will be answered with contempt. They cannot express higher, than to oppose and militate against a religion, introduced and brought into the world by so clear, divine light, lustre, and glory, not by arguments, but by jests! O that we could but see their arguments to dispute those keys out of his hands that holds them! But do they think to laugh away the power of the Son of God? "He also will laugh at their calamity," &c. (Prov. i.) or expose them to the laughter of men wiser than they. Ps. lii. 5, 6. It is little wit to despise what they cannot disprove. When we find a connexion between death and judgment, how will they contrive to disjoin them? They will be as little able to disprove the one, as withstand the other.

But a great residue, it is to be hoped, our blessed Redeemer will, in due time, conquer in the most merciful way, inspiring them with divine wisdom and love, detecting their errors, mollifying their hardness, subduing their enmity, making them gladly submit to his easy yoke and light burden. He is, before the world end, to have a numerous seed, and we are not to despair of their rising up more abundantly than hitherto among ourselves, so as no man shall be therefore ashamed to be thought a serious Christian, because it is an unfashionable or an ungenteel thing.

Then will honour be acquired, by living as one that believes a life to come, and expects to live for ever, as devoted ones to the Ruler of both worlds, and candidates for a blessed immortality under his dominion. Nor will any man covet to leave a better name behind him here, or a more honourable memorial of himself, than by having lived a holy, virtuous life. It signifies not nothing, with the many, to be remembered when they are gone; therefore is this trust wont to be committed to marbles and monumental stones. Some have been so wise, to

prefer a remembrance among them that were so, from their having lived to some valuable purpose. When Rome abounded with statues and memorative obelisks, Cato forbade any to be set up for him, because (he said) he had rather it should be asked, Why he had not one, than why he had. *Plutarch, de Gerund. Republ.*

What a balmy memory will one generation leave to another, when "the savour of the knowledge of Christ shall be diffused in every place," (2 Cor. ii. 14,) and every thing be counted as dross and dung, that is in any competition with the excellency of that knowledge; when that shall overflow the world, and one age praise his mighty works, and proclaim his power and greatness to the next: and the branches of religious families, whether sooner or later transplanted, shall leave an odour, when they are cut off, that shall demonstrate their nearer union with the true Vine, or speak their relation to the "Tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations;" even those that were deciduous, and have dropped off, may (without straining a borrowed expression) signify somewhat towards this purpose.

4. From both the mentioned subjects, good parents may learn to do God and their Redeemer all the service they can, and have opportunity for, in their own time; without reckoning too much upon what shall be done, by a well educated, hopeful son, after they are gone: unless the like dispensation could be pleaded unto that which God gave to David, to reserve the building of the temple to his son Solomon, which, without as express a revelation, no man can pretend. The great keeper of these keys may cross such purposes, and, without excusing the father, dismiss the son first. But his judgments are a great deep, too deep for our line: and his mercy is in the heavens, (Ps. xxxvi.) extending from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him; and his righteousness unto children's children. Ps. ciii.

A DISCOURSE

RELATING TO

THE EXPECTATION

OF

FUTURE BLESSEDNESS.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

HEB. X. 36.

For ye have need of patience; that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

IT is evident the Creator of this lower world never intended it to be the perpetual dwelling-place of its inhabitants, if man had continued innocent. Inasmuch as sin and death, by inseparable connexion, entered together; had sin never entered, death would never have had place here: and whereas, by the blessing of God, multitudes had been continually born into this world, and none had ever died out of it; by consequence it must have been, in time, so over-peopled, as not to contain its inhabitants. Whereupon, man having been created in a state of probation, as his fall showed, and a candidate for a better state in some nobler region; the time of probation being over, (the limits whereof, considering the sad events that soon ensued, it was to no purpose for us to know, nor consequently for God to reveal) it could not be, but that nature itself, being, in every one, pure and genuine, must prompt him to continual aspirings towards the highest perfection whereof, by the divine will, he should find himself capable: though yet it could not consist with the sinlessness of his present state to be over-hasty; but the conscience of his being a debtor for all his present attainments to the freest and most munificent bounty, must oblige him to a dutiful compliance with the wise and sovereign pleasure of his blessed Lord; to a cheerful contentation, and willingness, that he should make what further use of him he should see fit, for transmitting a holy life and nature to such as should come after him; and to a most calm, serene, and pleasant expectation of being seasonably translated higher.

But now sin and death having invaded this world and spread through it, into how horrid a gulf have they turned this part of God's creation! Men having by their own apostacy cut themselves off from God, do each of them grasp at Deity; every one attempts to fill up his room, and is so profanely insolent, as to affect being a god to himself, his own first and last. And all having withdrawn themselves from God, and abandoned his interest, which the law of their creation and their dependent state obliged them to serve, they have no common interest left; whereupon every one makes his own his only interest. And that sovereign principle of divine love being extinct, whereby they were to love God with all their hearts, souls, minds, and might, which is the first and great command; the second branch, like the former, by which they were all, for his sake, to love each other as himself, naturally fails and dies. Whence every one sets up himself, in exclusion to God, and all other men. And that self, (all concern for their better and nobler part, which could only have its support and satisfaction in God, being suppressed and lost) is only their baser, their carnal self. It is this alone they are concerned for. And every one seeks to catch and engross all that he can, for the service and gratification of this vile, sensual self, out of this sensible world; which, because it is all empty vanity, and hath not enough in it to satiate so enormous and ungoverned an appetite, this makes them tear this world in pieces; every one snatching what he can of it for himself. Hence are wars, and fightings. James iv. 1, 4. And as by *friendship* every one seeks to contract with this world separately and alone, so as to engross it to himself, apart from other men, they make themselves enemies to God; so they become devils to one another. And thus are men generally drowned in perdition and destruction. But the merciful God hath appointed his own Son, a Redeemer for us, who gave himself for our sins, to deliver us ("to take us out from," as the word, Gal. i. 4, signifies) this present evil world; whose first law, and most deeply fundamental to the whole Christian state, as the case before stated required, is that of self-denial; which, so far as it obtains, doth truly restore us to ourselves, and to our first and primitive state and place in God's creation. "For having suffered once for us, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God," (1 Pet. iii. 18,) "and having redeemed us to God by his blood," (Rev. v. 9,) when he shall have obtained this his end upon us, all things fall right with us as to him, ourselves, and one another.

Yet because the wise and God-becoming methods, which are used in pursuance of the Redeemer's design, do not generally take place, or prevail against the spirit of this world; but men, through their own wicked inclination, obstinately adhere to this

world, seeking their all from it; and the usurping god of this world blinding their minds, that the glorious light of the gospel of Christ should not shine to them, (2 Cor. iv. 4,) and being an inworking spirit in the children of disobedience, (Ephes. ii. 2,) leading them captive at his will, (2 Tim. ii. 26,) and that this prince of the darkness of this world, made up of malice and envy against God, and of malignity and mischief against men, as their common Apollyon, and destroyer, doth with all his legions haunt and infest this lower world, till the time of their torment come; and that thus, enmity against God and his Christ is fomented, and naturally propagated from age to age in this world: it is therefore God's righteous and declared pleasure, to put an end to this state of things; not to continue this world, as the stage of his perpetual dishonours; but to shut it up by the final judgment, and at last consume it with fire. In the meantime, while he is gradually consuming sinners out of this earth, he is, by equal degrees, gathering home his own out of it. And to them, how great a privilege is it to be taken out from this present evil world! Which that they may apprehend with savour and relish, their blessed Lord hath let them have a foresight of death abolished, and of life and immortality brought to light in his gospel; and gives them the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that they may know the hope of their calling, (Ephes. i. 17, 18,) endowing them with that faith, which is the substance of the things they hope for. Heb. xi. 1. Whereupon, having all the glories of the other world in view, and the representation of a state, which they have reason to apprehend as much more blissful and glorious, than, in the way of even primitive nature, they could have attained to; in proportion, as the second Adam doth excel the first in dignity, performances, and glory: here, therefore, their *need of patience*, in expecting this final issue of things, to themselves in particular, and to the whole redeemed community, is most conspicuous; and appears great, even as it relates to this expectation, though they did not labour under the pressure of very grievous evils besides, which yet must increase that need.

But it is this *expectation* itself, to which I intend principally to confine the present discourse. In reference whereunto, the greater the pleasure is of our foresight, the greater need we shall have of this patience; *i. e.* as our foresight, though beholding the terrible things, death, and the final dissolution of all things, which must intervene, doth yet terminate on the blessed consequents thereof. And those consequents, *viz.* the enjoyments and blessedness of the future state, it is plain the apostle did intend in these words, as the context evidently shows, *i. e.* whether you consider the foregoing, or the following context. For that great recompence of reward, mentioned

in the immediately foregoing, (*v.* 35,) and the salvation of our souls, in the close of this chapter; and the things hoped for and not seen, in the very beginning of the next, do plainly show, the discourse being of a piece, that the *promise* to be received, must be the promise of that blessedness, that is not to be enjoyed, in the fulness of it, but by intervening death; nor by all holy men together till the end of all things. *ch.* xi. 13. And whereas we have here the expression of *receiving* the promise, it is plain the promise must be understood objectively; *i. e.* that transcendent good that was promised; *viz.* that principally, wherein all the promises do finally and lastly centre: which, it is plain, the apostle here most especially intends, as being eminently called the promise. Whereupon there are now two things that offer themselves to our observation from this scripture:—that the business of a sincere Christian in this world is to be doing the will of God: and—that patience, in expecting the consequent blessedness of the future state, is a needful requisite in every sincere and thorough Christian. The former of these I shall not insist upon; but only touch transiently.

I need not tell you that, by the will of God, we are to understand the object of his will, or that which he wills, *viz.* the thing willed; not his will itself, which is not a thing yet to be done, but eternal, as his own very being itself: and again, that you may easily apprehend it is our duty willed by him, and not mere events, that must be understood to be the object of this will, *viz.* wherein we have a part to act; otherwise how are we said to do his will? Of this every sincere Christian must be the active instrument. All creatures, whether they will or no, whether they design any such thing, or design it not, must be the passive subjects, upon which his will takes place. But to be the active instrument thereof, is, in fact, the business only of a devoted person, one given up to God in Christ. Such only are in an immediate capacity, or promptitude to do the will of God, intentionally, and with their own design; though it be the undoubted duty of all, who are naturally capable thereof.

Will this rebel world never consider this, that are in a continual war with him in whose hands is their breath, on this high point, whose will shall be supreme; and dread not the issue of so unequal a combat, between omnipotence and an earthen potsherd; nor bethink themselves what woes impend, and hang over their guilty heads, for so mad insolence as striving with their Maker? Isa. xlv. 9. Will they never consider it, that pretend subjection to him, when their very pretence is a mockery; and that affront him with the frequent repetition of that ludicrous petition, "Thy will be done on earth," amidst

their open, contemptuous oppositions thereto? But I shall apply myself to consider the latter of these; that patience in the expectation of the blessedness of the heavenly estate, is very needful to every sincere and thorough Christian.— And in speaking to this, I shall—give some account of this patience, according as it is to have this exercise, in expecting future blessedness: and—labour to evince to you the necessity of it; how needful a thing it is to any serious and thorough Christian. And so the use will ensue.

I. I shall give some account of this patience, as it is to be exercised in the present case. We might, indeed, assign a third occasion of exercising patience, besides *suffering* present incumbent evils, and *expecting* a future hoped good, *viz. doing* the good which belongs to the duty of our present state, which the text points out to us in what it interposes, "after ye have done the will of God," and which is intimated, when we are charged "not to be weary of well-doing," (Gal. vi. 9,) and, "by a patient continuance in well-doing to seek honour, glory, immortality," &c. (Rom. ii. 7;) and to "run with patience the race set before us," (Heb. xii. 1;) when also the good ground is said to bring forth with patience. Luke viii. 15. But considering the pleasure which doing good contains in itself, and that the patience it gives occasion for is accidental, and arises from the other two, either the sufferings to which doing good often exposes, or the expectation of a greater good in a perfect state, when also all indisposition and lassitude shall perfectly cease; we need not make this a distinct head. Or, however, our present design confines us, chiefly, to the patience that is to be exercised in the expectation of our final good, *viz. blessedness:*—and in speaking hereto, I shall —lay down some things more generally, and—thence proceed to what will more particularly concern the matter in hand.

1. There are some things more generally to be considered, which, though more remotely, will aptly serve our purpose.

(1.) That the natural constitution of the human soul disposeth it equally to covet and pursue a desirable good, as to regret and shun a hurtful evil. This is plain to any that understand their own natures, and take any notice of the most connatural motions and operations of their inward man.

(2.) That the want of such a desirable and suitable good, understood to be so, is as truly afflicting and grievous, as the pressure of a present evil.

(3.) That an ability to bear that want, is as real and needful an endowment, as the fortitude by which we endure a painful evil. Yea, and it may be as sensibly painful, the pain of thirst being as grievous as that of a wound or bruise. Therefore, the ability to bear it without despondency, or any perturbation, or

discomposure of spirit, call it by what name you will, is a most desirable advantage and benefit to any man.

(4.) That, therefore, it equally belongs to patience, to be exercised in the one case as well as in the other. And the general nature of it being found in each, as we shall further see hereafter, the name is, with equal fitness, common to both, and to be given alike to either of them. For what do names serve for, but to express the natures of things as near as we can? These generals being thus premised, I shall—

2. Proceed more distinctly to give account of patience, according to this notion of it, by showing—what it supposes: and—wherein it consists.

(1.) What it supposes, as it hath its exercise this way, *viz.* in the expectation of the blessedness of the future state.

First. That blessedness, truly so called, be actually understood and apprehended by the expectants, as a real and most desirable good to them. They can, otherwise, never think themselves to need patience in expecting it. To the blind, befooled world, true blessedness is a frightful thing. They run from it as a *mormo*, or some terrible appearance. Religion, *i. e.* nearness to God, and inward conversation with him, (which we will not say hath affinity with it, but contains it, or is the same thing,) they dread as a formidable darkness, or the shadow of death. Therefore, they say to God, "Depart from us." Whereupon it is not the want of this blessedness, but the thing itself, so monstrously misunderstood, that gives exercise to their patience; nor have they patience enough for it. The divine presence they cannot endure.

Secondly. The delays and deferring of this blessedness must be an afflicting and felt grievance. Otherwise patience can have no place or exercise about it. Paganish morality hath taught us, *Nulla est virtus quæ non sentis perpeti:* "it is no virtue at all to bear that which I do not feel."—*Seneca.* A stone, if it bear the most heavy weight, yet feels it not: and, saith that instructive writer, we ascribe not to the virtuous man the hardness of a stone. If I have no feeling of a grievance in the deferred blessedness of the future state, I have no use for patience in expecting it. "Hope deferred (saith one divinely wise) maketh the heart sick." There will be a sickness at the heart, by the delay of what I hope for, most of all, when the sum of my blessedness is the thing hoped for, and still deferred. The delay must be as grievous as the attainment is pre-apprehended to be pleasant and joyous; *viz.* that when it comes it is a tree of life; so the gratefulness of enjoyment is, in the opposite sentence, (Prov. xiii. 12,) set against the heart-sickness of expectation. They that never felt their hearts sick with the desire of heaven, and the blessed-

ness of that state, cannot conceive of it a tree of life beforehand, nor ever know what patience in expecting it signifies, in the meantime. These things being supposed unto this patience, we next come to show,—

(2.) Wherein it consists: and are here to consider that its more special nature cannot be understood, without taking some previous short notice of its general nature, or what it hath in it common to it with other patience under the same name. Its more general notion seems not capable of any fitter expression, than an ability becomingly to endure. But because that may be without or with reference to God; this latter we are to single out, for the subject of our present discourse, as that which the text expressly intends: "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the promise." And its reference to God may be twofold, *viz.* both as he is the *author* and the *object* of it.

1. As he is the *author:* inasmuch as it is a most useful principle and disposition of soul, which, with a compassionate regard to the exigency of our present state, God is pleased to implant in such as he hath a favour for, that they may not be exposed, as a vessel in a wide and stormy sea, unable, otherwise, to endure, and under a necessity of sinking, or of being broken in pieces. In their make and frame, they are fitted to their state, even by gracious vouchsafement: and therefore is this fitly reckoned a divine grace. We find it placed among the fruits of the Spirit, (Gal. v. 22,) and are therefore to count it, as that is the Spirit of grace, a most needful and excellent grace of that blessed Spirit; by which, duly exercised, the soul is composed unto a right temper, not only in bearing the evils of this present state, but in waiting for the blessedness of the future. And thus we consider it as, not only a rational temperament, that may, in great part, take its rise from ourselves, and the sober use of our own thoughts, (which yet it unbecomes us not to employ to this purpose) but also as a gratuitous donation, a gift of the good Spirit of God. And hereof there is a not obscure intimation in the text, telling us we have need of patience. It is grace, or merciful vouchsafement, that considers what we do need. Whence, therefore, we hear of a throne of grace, whither we are to come for mercy, and grace to help in time of need. Heb. iv. 16.

And, as such, how fitly is its nature signified in the mentioned place by the word *μακροθυμία*, "longanimity;" which we read, less properly, "long-suffering;" there being no notion of suffering in the word; taking also *θυμὸς*, or "animus," in present composition, as not only signifying mind, as that denotes the understanding faculty, or mere intellect; but lively desire, a certain vigour and strength of spirit, zeal, hope, courage, fortitude, an unaptness to a yielding succumbency; and this (as the

other word signifies) through a long space or tract of time: when desire and hope are lengthened and continued, without despondency, even to the appointed term, and during the prescribed season of expectation. And so the word doth rather incline to express patience, as it refers unto a desired good that we are expecting and waiting for. And you find it mentioned with other graces, (2 Pet. i. 5, 6,) by the word in the text, ὑπομονὴ, which is equally apt to express a permanent waiting, or expectation of good, as suffering of incumbent evil. But also, if we consider that context, we there may discern its heavenly descent, and its being a part of the offspring of God among men. For immediately, upon the mention of a divine nature participated (or a godly frame and habit of soul) that carries a man up, or enables him to emerge, and escape the pollutions of this impure world; besides this escape are to be added (not without our own intervening diligence) the several following gracious principles, as branches, into which that divine nature shoots forth, exerts, and spreads itself; of which this patience is one.

And, to show its divine original, God is pleased to style himself in his word, "the God of patience," (Rom. xv. 5,) it is his very image in the soul. For is not the divine patience one of the great attributes by which we are to know him, and for which we are to adore him? It is that, by which he suffers, *not hurt*, whereof the divine Being is not capable; but, by which he bears much *wrong* from his injurious, revolted creatures. Whence it is a mighty power, that is said to lie in the divine patience. "Let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, The Lord is long-suffering," &c. Numb. xiv. 17, 18. It is indeed his power over himself, by which he restrains his anger, his omnipotent anger, that would otherwise go forth to consume offending creatures. We cannot, indeed, conceive any such passion in God, which he finds a difficulty in restraining, though, speaking to men, he uses their language, and bespeaks them in their own idioms, and forms of speech. But it is owing to the necessary, self-originate concurrence of all perfections in his nature and being, that nothing unbecoming Deity can have place there. In the meantime, since the new creature is God-like, the image of God, we hence are taught to conceive of patience, (a part of that production) not under the notion of dull and sluggish impotency, but of power; an ability to endure, as before, and that, as having its original and pattern in the blessed God himself.

2. And it is also specified by a respect to God as the *object*. For a deference to his holy pleasure in ordering the occasions of such exercise, is carried in the notion of it. It hath in it submission to the will of God. And by this it comes to be taken into religion, or religion must be taken into it, and be com-

prehended in our conception of it: true and gracious patience, and every exercise of it, is to be looked upon as a part of piety and godliness. We are here not to suppose that patience in expecting good, and in bearing evils, must have distinct notions, but exercises only. And, though these exercises are distinct, yet as the suffering of many incumbent evils is, in our present state, complicated with the absence and expectation of the good we desire; these exercises are scarce ever to be separated. It is, therefore, the less to surprise us, that this ingredient into the nature of patience, *submission to God*, should run into both, as we find a mixture in the occasions thereof. As when the Psalmist complains of them that breathed cruelty against him, he says, "He had fainted," (as we translate, for those words, "I had fainted," are not in the Hebrew text, but concealed in a more emphatical aposiopesis,) *q. d.* It cannot be expressed, how deplorable my case had been, if I had not believed to see the goodness of the Lord; and adds, "Wait on the Lord, he shall strengthen thine heart," &c. Psalm xxvii. 13, 14.

This, in the meantime, is the voice of patience,—*It is the Lord;* and, in the present case, it is he that disposes and orders I should so long bear and wait; that over-awes my soul, and brings it down to a peaceful and dutiful acquiescence in his good pleasure; peaceful to myself, dutiful towards him. "Let him do what seems him good." Since it is his pleasure, that I should wait so long before I shall become a blessed creature, I shall admire and praise him that I hope I shall be so at last; but, with profound submission unto his purpose and determination herein, wait, till he shall think fit to fulfil this good pleasure of his goodness towards me, in accomplishing my desires, and in answering my expectations fully, at last; when I shall be brought into that state "where is fulness of joy; and be placed at thy right hand, O Lord, where are rivers of pleasure for evermore!" The thing is wholly from him, and it is fit the time should be also. And now, as true patience hath belonging to it what is so special, *viz. a respect to God*, which we understand to be causal of it, in its *proper kind;* so we may give a further short account of it, considering it—*In its peculiar effect;* or, (as it is called, James i. 4,) the work of patience, *viz.* that it gives a man a mastery and conquest over all undue and disorderly passions. It fixes the soul in a composed serenity, creates it a region of sedate and peaceful rest; infers into it a silent calm; allays, or prevents all turbulent agitations; excludes whatsoever of noisy clamour; permits no tumults, no storms or tempest within, whatsoever of that kind, in this our expecting state, may beset a man from without. And this most connatural effect of patience, we see how most aptly it is

expressed by our Saviour, (Luke xxi. 19,) "In your patience possess ye your souls," as if he had said, It is patience that must give a man the *dominium sui*, and keep him, under God, in his own power. He intimates, if you have not patience, you are outed of yourselves; you are no longer masters of your own souls; can have no enjoyment of yourselves; and, therefore, are much less to expect a satisfying enjoyment of him.

The temper of spirit it introduces, in opposition to angry and querulous repinings, is a dutiful silence. "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." Ps. xxxix. 9. In opposition to fear, it is fortitude; "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord," (Psalm xxvii. 14:) in opposition to a despairing dejection of mind, confidence; as in this context, Cast not away your confidence—you have need of patience: in opposition to immoderate sorrow for your deferred felicity, complacency; "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness; giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," (Col. i. 11, 12,) *q. d.* O blessed be God for our prospect! and that we have a firm ground whereupon to live, "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God." Rom. v. 2. It is that, by which, with this composure of soul, we expect, and are still looking for, "the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ," (Titus ii. 13,) knowing, "that to them who look for him, he shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation," (Heb. ix. 28,) for then it is that our blessedness is complete, when he shall appear the second time. Then all those many things concur, that are requisite to the making the work of our salvation most perfect and consummate work. And patience is to have its perfect work, in commensuration thereto. But while we are present in these earthly bodies, we are absent from the Lord; and many things are wanting to the happiness we expect. This is the patience we are to exercise in the meantime. We may thus shortly sum up the matter, *viz.* that in reference to the delay of the blessedness we expect;—we ought not to be without sense, as if it were no grievance, which were stupidity, and not patience: and—that we ought not to have an excessive sense of it, which were mere peevishness and impatience. Therefore, having given this account what this patience, considered in this exercise, imports; I come,—

II. To show the necessity of it, in a serious and thorough Christian, from the consideration of—the principles, from whence this necessity arises, and—the ends, which it is neces-

sary unto. It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that the form of speech here used in the Greek, χρείαν ἔχειν, doth directly lead us to consider the latter of these, usefulness to such or such purposes, rather than the intrinsical necessity of a thing in itself. But it cannot be denied, that, to make a man a complete Christian, must be taken in, as a primary and fundamental part, the use of patience, subservient to all the rest. And we find it recommended upon this account, (James i. 4,) "Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect, and entire, lacking nothing." Therefore, what shows its necessity, as belonging to the inward frame and constitution of a Christian, cannot be irrelative to our purpose.

1. And this appears from its intimate connexion with several things, that most confessedly belong, as principles, to the most inward frame and constitution of a Christian. The principles, we shall here refer to, are either subordinate, or sovereign and supreme. And they both make it necessary, and produce it.

First. Those that are subordinate, concur in the constitution of a truly Christian frame, and, thereupon, both make this exercise of patience necessary, and existent; or make way for it, that it may obtain, and take place with them in a man's soul. They are such as these:—

Faith of the unseen state; that faith, which in this very context, the beginning of the next chapter, is called the "substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." This faith of a Christian tells him, God hath made report to me of the glory and blessedness of the unseen world; and I believe it, take his word, rely upon it. I do, as the apostle says, "hope for eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, hath promised." Titus i. 2. This realizes the things themselves, makes them, that are future, as present. It serves me instead of eyes, and present sense. They are things, in reference whereto, we must walk by faith, and not by sight. That faith makes a supply for vision, as we find it did in reference to an unseen Christ. One great part of the expected blessedness of the other state is that beatific sight of him, which we shall have; and which, believed, and hoped for, maintains present life and vigour in us towards him; though we have not had the privilege of seeing him in the flesh, as divers had in time past; yet, not having so seen, we love him; and, for that other sight of him in glory, how far off that may be, in time to come, we know not. But though so, too, we now, or as yet, see him not, "believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Pet. i. 8. If I do, with my whole heart and soul, believe God telling me that thus it shall be, this faith will operate to this height, a glorious joy; much

more to this depth, a soul-composing patience. Therefore, are these two, faith, and patience, so often paired, and put together in Scripture; and particularly, with reference to this expectation of inheriting the promises. Heb. vi. 12. And how plainly is the affinity, and near alliance of these two signified, (James v. 7, 8,) where the apostle, exhorting to the patience of expectants, saith, "Be patient, brethren; behold the husbandman waiteth,—be you also patient;"—subjoins the proposal of the great object of their faith, the coming of the Lord draws nigh. It is the faith of the unseen state (which commences to the whole Christian community, at their Lord's coming) that makes patience, at once, both necessary and possible, yea, and actual too; necessary, because the prospect it gives is so glorious; possible, because it is so sure. Upon the former account, without patience, the delay could not be endured; upon the latter, because it affords continual relief and strength, that one may be capable of enduring, and actually endure. We more easily bear the delay of the most excellent things, whereof we are sure at last. Out of the very eater itself, comes forth meat and sweetness.

Nor shall we unfitly add *hope* to faith. We learn them to be distinguishable, finding them distinctly mentioned, as two of that great triad of principles, said to abide. 1 Cor. xiii. 13. Nor shall be at a loss how to distinguish them, if we consider faith as more directly respecting the ground upon which we rest, the divine testimony or revelation; hope, the object unto which we, thereupon, reach forward in desire and expectation. And, as we see how this latter is complicated with faith; so we may see how it connects with patience. Rom. viii. 24, 25. "We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for it? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

And, if we follow the thread of discourse through this context, and observe how it begins, "We are saved by *hope;*" and how it terminates in *patience:* it is obvious to collect, that were it not for patience, we were lost: and may so learn how further to understand our Saviour's words, (Luke xxi. 19,) "In your patience, possess you your own souls;" *viz.* as possessing, or keeping, stands opposed to losing. They that cannot endure to the end, cannot be saved. So is the new creature composed by a contexture of principles, to be, under God, a self-preserving thing.

Love is another great constituent of the Christian frame, as such, that makes patience necessary; as much patience is requisite to make them endure one another's absence, who are very cordial lovers of one another. Nothing is more essential in the

constitution of a sincere Christian, than divine love: it is the very heart and soul of the new creature: love desiring after God, as my supreme good; love delighting, and acquiescing in him above all, according to my present measure of enjoyment of him; which being very imperfect, makes my patience most absolutely necessary, till it can be perfect. If I have not patience, how can I endure the absence of him, whom I love better than myself? And that love of him doth connote, and carry along with it, the extinction of the love of this present world, so that it shall not longer be predominant; its predominancy being inconsistent with the love of God. "Love not this world"—"if any man love this world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John ii. 15. Now when a soul is mortified to the love of this world, it is not hereby quite stupified; love is not destroyed, but turned to another, and its more proper object; and is so much the more intense Godward, by how much the more it is drawn, and taken off from all inferior things. Thereupon it must be so much the more grievous to be kept off from him; and that grievance cannot be borne without patience. For that which aggrieves is the absence of my best good, which can have no equivalent; and the want whereof nothing can supply, or fill up its room. God cannot be loved without being known: nor can he be known to be God, but as the best good. Though I can never know him perfectly, yet so much I must be supposed to know of him, that he is better than all things else; that nothing that is not superior in goodness to all things besides, even infinitely superior, can be God; and nothing, but such an uncreated good, can make me a happy creature. And what patience do I need, to make me content not to be happy! But he were not such a good, goodness itself, if he could impose it upon me to choose to be miserable, or never to be happy. He only requires that I wait awhile, that I be patient of some delay.

And hereupon, if my love be such as it ought, it doth not only make patience necessary, but facile too. It corresponds not to its glorious and most excellent object, if it be not a very reverential, and most obsequious love, full of duty towards him on whom it is placed; if it hath not in it a regard to the blessed God, as well under the notion of the sovereign Ruler, as the sovereign good. And thereupon my patience, as hath been said, carrying religion in it, *i.e.* a dutiful disposition towards God; the same principle which makes it necessary, makes it practicable also. When he, whose devoted servant I am, hath signified to me his good pleasure, *viz.* he finally intends me to a blessed state; but that in the state wherein I now am, he hath present service for me to do; or that he sees it requisite before he translates me out of this state, further to prepare me for a better; and requires in the mean time, I seek honour,

glory, and immortality, by a patient continuance in well-doing: my love to him itself, which makes it to appear necessary, makes it also appear to me the most reasonable thing in all the world; and that my heart say within me, even from the power and spirit of divine love, when he imposes this expectation, though tedious, and when he inflicts any thing grievous, "I was dumb, O Lord, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it," (Ps. xxxix. 9,) though I could not have taken it from another. We further add, not as a single, but more comprehensive principle,—

Holiness, which, impressed upon the soul, suits it unto the heavenly state, and so makes it covet it more earnestly. All things naturally tend to the perfection of that state unto which they are predisposed, which is more congenerous to them, or whereto they have an agreement in their natures. It is so in the new nature, as well as that which is common to other creatures. All things naturally tend to their like. It cannot be less thus with the new creature, whose nature is improved, heightened, and perfected, beyond that of other creatures. It is the divine holiness impressed upon the soul, that suits it unto the participation of the heavenly inheritance. None ever come to heaven, but they that are made meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. Col. i. 12. They that are made meet for heaven, suited in the temper of their spirits to it, cannot but long for it, and do therefore need patience, while they are waiting. It is indeed but that to which they are begotten. Holiness in general is the product of regeneration. And we find, that in 1 Pet. i. 3, we are said to be "begotten unto the lively hope." Hope must be taken there objectively, by what follows, "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." *v.* 4. A disposition to it is in our very *natalitia:* we are begotten to it by the implantation of this principle, of the new, divine, and heavenly birth. Such are born for that country, born with a suitableness to that inheritance, therefore cannot but have earnest longings after it; and therefore cannot but need patience, that they may endure the delay. And that also connotes and carries with it these two things,—hatred of the opposite, and—a tendency unto the improvement and perfection of itself.

Hatred of the opposite, sin. And this makes a serious Christian groan; I have a body of death hanging about me. I cannot get rid of the impurities which I hate. And because the very habit of their soul is now so far changed, that they are made holy, they cannot but hate the contrary. You that love the Lord, hate evil; it belongs to your character to do so. Ps. xcvii. 10. And they know, that they shall never be quite rid of it, as long as they are here. And though as sin is an evil against God,

it is not to be the object of their patience; yet, as it is a grievance to themselves, the remainders of it are, so far, to be the object about which their patience may be exercised, that they are not to enter into any quarrel, that he doth not immediately make them perfect in the very first moment of their conversion. And as there is conjunct with this frame of holiness, hatred of the opposite, so there is—

A tendency to the improving and heightening itself: for every thing naturally affects its own perfection, or the perfection of its own proper kind. As nature, in every thing that grows, aims at a certain pitch, at a certain ἀκμή; so, where there is an inchoate holiness, there cannot but be a tendency unto consummate, perfect holiness. The precept, therefore, agrees to the temper of their mind, to whom it is given, "Perfecting holiness, in the fear of God." 2 Cor. vii. 1. This is having the law written in our heart, and put into the inward part. But, as holiness includes conformity to the preceptive will of God, so it doth to his disposing will, being made known. Therefore, when we understand it to be his pleasure, we should wait: the holy nature itself, which prompts us so earnestly to desire the perfection of our state, must also incline us (it were, otherwise, made up of contradictions) patiently to expect it, our appointed time. Herein we are to be subject to the Father of our spirits; as to the fathers of our flesh, when they shall think fit to give a full portion. Heb. xii. 9.

Secondly. Besides all these subordinate principles, we are to consider the co-operation of a sovereign and supreme principle with them, and that is the blessed Spirit of God himself. He begets, raises, and cherisheth such desires after the blessedness of the heavenly state, as makes this patience most absolutely necessary. You find in 2 Cor. v. 4, where the apostle is speaking of his earnest aspiring, and groaning, "not to be unclothed of this flesh, this earthly tabernacle, but to be clothed upon;" *q. d.* To be unclothed, is too low and mean a thing; hereby I only avoid the troubles of life. This can by no means terminate desires of so high a kind, and of so divine and heavenly an original. These were only the desires of a brute, oppressed by a sensible, too heavy burden. But the thing I aspire to, and groan after, is to be clothed upon. It is somewhat positive, and much higher, *viz.* the perfection of that state I am designed to, and by grace, made capable of, wherein mortality is to be swallowed up of life. These are desires proceeding not from the sense of what we feel; but from the attraction of what we see; and not from a brutal, but a divine nature. So he next tells us, (*v.* 5,) whence they were. "Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." It is the Spirit of God working in us, that makes us thus rest-

lessly aspire and groan. He that hath wrought us for this self-same thing is God. It is more than if it had been barely said, God hath wrought us for this self-same thing. So he might express a work common to him with other agents; as if it had been said, *He* hath wrought us for the self-same thing, and so might *another*. But, *He* that hath wrought us for this self-same thing, *is God;* this is a far more emphatical way of speaking; *i.e.* it doth assert Deity to him that doth this work; *q.d.* "None but God could do such a thing." Therefore observe the form of expression here used, that we lose not the emphasis of it. The act—working us for the same thing—is not affirmed of God, as it would in this form,—God hath wrought us.—But *being God*, or Godhead, is affirmed of the agent, *q.d.* he cannot but be a God, that doth work this upon us. The other way of expression would serve to represent an action that were common, indefinitely, to one or another agent; as if we say, "The king walks, speaks," &c.; but to express an act peculiar to majesty, we would say, "he that reigns, is the king." This expression then, doth not only *ascribe* but *appropriate* the work done, to God. What! that moles, such dunghill worms, should thus aspire! He is a God that hath done this! For that such a work should be done upon such creatures, to mould them into such a frame, that now nothing terrestrial, nothing temporary, nothing within the region of mortality will satisfy; but they are restless for that state, wherein mortality shall be swallowed up of life; He that hath wrought us for this self-same thing, is God! This is the work of a Deity!

Therefore also, are so solemn thanksgivings tendered to the Father, for his having made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, (Col. i. 12,) which he doth, not only by bringing life and immortality to light in the gospel, (2 Tim. i. 10,) but by giving the Spirit of wisdom and revelation—by enlightening the eyes of our understanding, that we may know the hope of our calling, (Ephes. i. 17, 18;) shining into our souls with such a vivific, penetrative, and transforming light, as should change their whole frame, and fully attemper them thereto. Now if it be a divine power that hath excited such desires and given such a disposition, it must be a divine power that must moderate them too; by giving also that patience, that shall enable us to wait for the fulfilling of them. And the rather doth there need the interposition of a God in the case, to make us endure, and patiently expect the state he hath wrought us for, inasmuch as the same Spirit that frames us for that state (as we see, recurring to the place before mentioned) doth also assure us of it; who hath given us the earnest of the Spirit. His Spirit, working in us, not only gives us a clear signification of the truth of the thing, but of our title; and therefore makes

us so earnestly aspire, and groan for it. Wherefore patience cannot but be the more necessary; and (the whole being entirely his work, who doth no inconsistent thing) the easier too. And so we find in Rom. viii. 23, 24, where it is said, That they that have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, do groan within themselves; they have the same aspirings that this apostle here speaks of; they groan earnestly within themselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of their body. The adoption; that is an allusion unto a known usage among the Romans, to whom the apostle here writes; and therefore they were the more capable of understanding it. There was among them a twofold adoption;—private, when such a patron did design to adopt such a one for his son, and express his purpose to such as were concerned, as he judged it convenient; which was but inchoate adoption:—public, when the action was solemn, *in foro*, and enrolled, a register kept of it. And this was the adoption the apostle here alludes to; the manifestation of the sons of God, as *v.* 19 of this chapter. Whereto agrees the expression of another apostle, "yet it doth not appear what we shall be; but when he shall appear, we shall be like him." 1 John iii. 2. When the sons of God are to be manifested, they shall appear like themselves, and like their Father. This is their public solemn adoption, when before men and angels they are declared sons of God. And this is that we groan for, says the apostle, having received the first-fruits of the Spirit. We groan for this, the perfection of our state; and thereupon would accordingly enter upon the inheritance, being assured that all his children are heirs, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," (as before in the same chapter, *v.* 17.) But now, whereas from these passages, He that wrought us for the self-same thing, is God: that it is he that made us meet for this inheritance; that the first-fruits of his Spirit made us groan for it; we collect, that it is divine power which gives this aptitude and inclination, and limits it. What is it, that doth so qualify divine power, but divine power?

It is, indeed, too plain, that the influence of this power received into such a subject, a mind, in too great part, yet carnalized, and situated amidst a sensible tempting world, meets with sufficient allays, and enough to obstruct its tendencies towards an object yet out of sight. But all this obstruction, such a power can easily overcome. Therefore we are equally to admire the wisdom of God as his power, not as simply omnipotent, though it be so; but as having its place and exercise in the most perfect divine nature, in which all excellencies meet; and which therefore is not exerted *ad ultimum*, so as to do all that almighty power can do, but what is convenient and fit to be done; that can moderate itself, can move forward, and *sistere se*, stop its motion at pleasure, so as to provide that desire and

patience may, in our present state, consist; and that whilst God hath work for us to do, and a station to fill up in this present world, we may not be weary of life; or by the expectation of blessedness in the other world, be made impatient of serving his purposes here, as long as it is his pleasure to continue us in this. So doth he all things, according to the counsel of his will! Thus, from the principles whence patience proceeds, you may collect how absolutely necessary it is.

2. You may collect it, too, from the *ends* which it serves. And I shall mention but these two, which are in the text: that which is nearer and more immediate—our doing the will of God:—remoter, and ultimate—our inheriting the promise.

This *nearer* end is manifestly supposed to be so; and withal, that patience is necessary thereto. For when we are told, "Ye have need of patience, that when ye have done the will of God," it is plainly signified, patience conduces to our doing God's will; and that without patience we cannot do it. Not that patience is the proper principle of doing it, but active vigour; yet the concomitancy of patience is requisite hereto; not directly, in respect to the thing to be done; but the time through which the doing of it must be continued, and the expectation, which, as hath been said, is complicated therewith. To the former, vigorous activity, a promptitude, and suitableness of mind and spirit to the divine will, even a love of holiness, whereof that will revealed is the measure, must be reckoned the genuine, requisite principle; as patience is to the latter. Therefore do we find labour ascribed to love; and patience to hope. 1 Thess. i. 3. If we have run well, and it is the will of God we shall lengthen out our course by a patient continuance in well-doing, and not express only a present agility, but patience in running the race,—without this we do not the will of God.

But, we are more largely to insist on the remoter, and more *ultimate end*—"that we may inherit that promise"—which we see is represented as the end of that former end, and patience made necessary to the latter, as it is necessary to the former. And can we in good earnest think of inheriting the promise, which is all of grace, whether God will, or no? And, if he will the end, doth it not equally belong to him to will the way and method of our attaining it? To be here somewhat particular. Two things we may conclude; God doth ordinarily will concerning the way wherein he conducts and leads on those that peculiarly belong to him, to the blessed end and consummate state he designs them to, the one whereof is also requisite to the other, *viz.*—their gradual growth and improvement in holiness, and all dutiful dispositions towards him, till they come nearer to maturity for glory, and a meetness for the heavenly state: and—their maintaining an intercourse with himself, in order hereto.—These things he wills

us to design through our whole course, though he is at liberty to shorten, or lengthen our course, as to him seems meet.

Our own gradual improvement; hereto such patience is necessary, for perpetual fretting must naturally hinder our growth. "Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect." James i. 4. It cannot have its perfect work, if it have not its work and exercise this way, as well as others,—"that ye may be perfect, and entire, wanting nothing." If you have not patience that you can endure such a delay, you will never grow, will be always starvelings. Do we not observe the method, wherein the divine wisdom brings all things to their ἀκμή, or perfect state? vegetables? sensitive creatures? in the several kinds of both? Do we not observe it in ourselves? and in our children? whom (as the comedian) we should most absurdly expect to be born old men. And as to our spiritual states, after conversion, or regeneration, what are the gifts vouchsafed by our glorified Lord meant for, but our growth to a perfect man? Conversion, it is true, till work of that kind be all over, perfects the whole body; but the increase of knowledge, and grace, perfects each particular member, or part.

And, besides the improvement of habitual principles, there is a fulness of actual duty and service, to be to our utmost endeavoured, that we "may stand complete, and perfect in all the will of God." Col. iv. 12. Every one hath his *pensum*, his allotment of work and time assigned him in this world, though some come not into the vineyard till the eleventh hour. What a sharp reproach is that, (Rev. iii. 2;) "I have not found thy works filled up!"—How glorious a character is that of the man after God's own heart, that after he had "by the will of God, served his generation,"—run through the course of service, which the divine will had measured out to him for his own age wherein he lived, he at length so seasonably fell asleep; was gathered to his fathers, as a shock of corn fully ripe. This is the state of growth and service; the other, the state of perfection and retribution. And to improvement and progress, patience is necessary, not only as being itself a part of our duty, the want whereof, therefore, must infer a maim; but as, also, it hath influence upon all other parts, and without which, therefore, there would be a universal languor and debility upon the whole new man; which is evident from what is to be added. It is through the Lord alone, we are to "make mention of his name." Isa. xxvi. 13. Without him we can do nothing, (John xv. 5,) neither grow, nor serve. Therefore, further is our patience necessary,—

That so our *communion and intercourse with God here*, according as in our present state we are capable, *may be continued*, and his communications to us therein, which we daily need, may not be obstructed. Herein lies the very life of our spirits, a conti-

nual intercourse between God and us. But of this, without such patience, we shall be incapable. See how the apostle argues, (Heb. xii. 9,) "The fathers of your flesh chastised you, and you gave them reverence; how much more shall we not be subject to the Father of our spirits, and live?" Shall we not be subject to the Father of our spirits? We must remember, that he, whom the apostle here calls by a more general title, the "Father of spirits," doth elsewhere vouchsafe to be styled (Num. xxvii. 16,) "the God of the spirits of all flesh." A most condescending expression! That he, who hath so innumerable myriads of spirits, whose dwelling is not with flesh, replenishing the spacious realms and regions of light and bliss above, should also not disdain to own a relation to this inferior sort of spirits, that are so meanly lodged, even in frail and mortal flesh; and to express a concern about them, that somewhat of tolerable order might be preserved among them, in their low and abject state; and therefore allow himself to be called the God of such spirits! This is admirable vouchsafement. And, because he is (in this other place) generally called, the "Father of spirits," comprehending these with the rest; upon both accounts, it belongs to him by prerogative to determine what spirits shall dwell in flesh, and what shall not; how long any such spirits shall dwell in flesh, and when they shall be removed, and taken out of this fleshly state. And observe what follows,—"shall we not be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?" The impatient will contend; they that cannot bear delay will quarrel, and that will be deadly to them. If we be not subject, we cannot live. He is the universal Father of spirits; all spirits are his offspring. And shall not he determine concerning the spirits he hath made, which shall, and how long they shall, inhabit flesh; as well the time, as the thing itself; or who shall, and who shall not? It is his pleasure, that my spirit should so long animate, and inhabit such a piece of clay; if I am not subject to him, I shall not live! This is severely monitory, and extends far. It admonishes me of danger as to my final state. For what is here said, hath reference to what is after said of the future vision of God; and our association to the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, whereof want of the patience prescribed, (*v.* 1,) through all the whole race set before us, hazards our falling short. But how are we by impatience, endangered, as to our final and eternal state of life! It is intimated, that without being patient, and subject, we cannot live now. Intercourse will be broken off between him and us; he will retire, and withhold his influence: and if he do so, and we pine away in our sins, how shall then we live? (as their misgiving hearts presage, Ezek. xxxiii. 10.)

But if spiritual life already fail, which is of the same kind

with blessed eternal life, and is therein perfected, what shall become of that life itself, which is but the perfection of the other? If we cannot live now, how shall we live eternally? If not a day, how for ever? It is true, "we are kept by the power of God;" but it is, "through faith unto salvation." 1 Pet. i. 5. And faith is necessary to support our patience, as hath been noted. This our Saviour prayed for to Peter, that amidst all his winnowings, his faith might not fail. And all this with this final reference, that we might be followers of them, who, through faith and patience, have inherited the promises, (Heb. vi. 12,) which plainly shows what is God's ordinary method of bringing his own, at last, to that inheritance. And this, in the context, which we were last considering, (Heb. xii.) is copiously illustrated by the method observed in families; wherein a prudent father considers how long it is fit a son should be under discipline; whereof, while he is patient, he is under paternal care, and enjoys the provisions of the family; but, if he will not be subject, how shall he live? This prudent conduct is not always observed by the fathers of our flesh. They use, sometimes, harsh severities, more for their own pleasure, and to gratify their own passion, than the child's profit. But with the Father of spirits no rash passions can have place. He only designs our profit and improvement, in the highest and most excellent kind, *i. e.* to make us partakers of his holiness; to make us more and more Godlike, and fit, at length, to be admitted into the presence of his glory. And whereas the mere deferring of our expected felicity is some chastisement, and rebuke upon us, for our yet-continuing impurities and disorders; there are also other afflictions that befall us in this our expecting state, which, though they proceed from this world's hatred, may proceed from the love of God, and are meant to work out for us greater glory, (2 Cor. iv. 17,) as now they tend to make us partakers, in a greater measure, of his holiness; which, as it is his glory, will be ours; and by his influence, a peaceable fruit of righteousness accrues to us, and grows up in us, upon which we are to feed and live. Now what conversation can there be between a father in a family, and a son in minority and under discipline, but by wise and tender care on the part of the former, and the dutiful submission of the latter? Or can the son hope the sooner to come by his inheritance, by wayward and contentious behaviour towards such a father? So that, both from the *principles* whence such patience proceeds, and the *ends* which it serves, we may collect the necessity of it unto every serious Christian.

III. And now how copious use might we make of so important a subject! But we must contract. We may learn from it,—

1. The desperate condition of those wretched creatures that

are of terrene minds, whose hearts, by habitual and prevailing inclination, cleave to this earth, and this earthly state. They can apprehend no need of patience, in expecting the blessedness of heaven. It is no grievance to them not to partake therein. They had rather live where they are; are better pleased with their present state of life. Tell them of patience in waiting for the heavenly felicity? It is language they understand not! O the wretched state of those forlorn souls, whose habitual temper makes them incapable of the exercise, or need of this patience! It may be said, indeed, of many a good man, that he doth not covet death, (which, for itself, no man can,) but it cannot be said of any good man, that he doth not covet blessedness, which, in a general, indeterminate notion, every man covets. But there is no truly good man, none that is regenerate, and born of God, who doth not particularly covet that wherein blessedness truly lies and doth consist. For all such are begotten to the lively hope—of the undefiled inheritance, reserved in heaven for them, (1 Pet. i. 3, 4,) nor can be supposed, when they covet blessedness, not to covet perfect blessedness. Such may indeed, not yet covet to die; because yet they may be under some doubt concerning their present state Godward: and so such a one doth not know, whether, if he die, he shall enter upon a blessed state, or no. But, in the meantime, it cannot be said of any good man, that he doth not covet to be blessed; though for that single reason, because he doubts of his title to the heavenly blessedness, he covets not death. Therefore that doubt doth not extinguish his desire of blessedness, but suspends only the desire of death, as an uncertain way to it; because it is equally the entrance into a state of misery, to them who have no title to blessedness, as it is unto a blessed state, to them that have a title. And concerning their present title, they are still in doubt; which way they hope, by divine assistance, if they have more time, may yet be gained. Whereas, upon supposition that doubt were removed, they would be glad to be gone. But this is their miserable case, whose hearts cleave to this earth, that they prefer it before all the blessedness and glory of heaven; and rather bless themselves from it, than desire to be blessed by it. If they can but live pleasantly, and as long as they would do here, take heaven, and all the blessedness and glory of it, that will for them! I would fain have you apprehend the deplorable condition of such men, upon sundry accounts.

(1.) Their temper differs from that of all the children of God; they are quite of another complexion from the whole family that belongs to him. For all that are the sons of God, as they are born from above, (ἄνωθεν, John iii. 3,) they are born with a disposition heavenward. Therefore, if such a man could but

view and behold himself, he could not but cry out, affrighted and amazed, "God be merciful to me; what sort of creature am I! If God be not merciful to me, to change me, his mercy can never own me for his; I am quite of a different make from all that ever had leave to call him Father! They all love heaven more than earth, and I love earth more than heaven!" That a man's own temper should distinguish him from all the divine offspring! Methinks it should be considered with dread and horror! That there should be a sort of men in this world, that are all lovers of God, as their best good, and longing to be at home with him in the heavenly state, and I to be severed from them all, my heart being strange to him, and always tending downward! This is a dismal thing! A sad reflection to any one, that can, and will reflect, and be so true to himself, as to own this to be his sense, "I had rather live amidst the vanities of this world, than partake in the glories of heaven! I had rather please my flesh and sense on earth, than enjoy the felicity of saints and angels above!" A fearful case! For now you have nothing to do with this character, belonging to holy men, of standing in sensible need of patience, that you may inherit the promise! nor,—

(2.) Can you inherit. For as all, so only, God's children are his heirs. They are no heirs who are not his children. Cast out the bondwoman, and her son: he cannot inherit with the son of the promise. The children of Jerusalem above are free; the rest are slaves. Can it be thought worthy of God to have bondmen, and slaves to vile terrene affections, for his sons; can they inherit the blessedness of heaven, that never loved, desired, or chose it; that always preferred this earth before it? Can any be brought to heaven violently, whether they will, or no? Whoever have come thither, first sought it, as the better country. Therefore God was not ashamed to be called their God, (Heb. xi. 16,) which implies, he would be ashamed to be called the God of an earthly-minded generation of men. And will he ever do the thing that he would be ashamed of? So ignominious a thing as to take base sons of the earth into his kingdom (who may all say, *in regno nati sumus*, "we are born of the kingdom," we belong to) for his children and heirs!

(3.) Notwithstanding their obstinate inclination and adherence to this earth, they still live in the continual fear of being removed out of it, *viz.* if they bethink themselves. And what sort of felicity is that, that can be blasted and extinguished by a thought; that depends only upon a present forgetfulness? How afflicting a misery to be united in affection with that, as my best good, which I continually fear to lose, and to have rent away from me!

(4.) Such addictedness to this earth, *i.e.* the desire of a per-

petual abode here, which is the complexion of all earthly-minded men, who herein never limit themselves, but should they live here never so many ages, they would be always of the same mind; I say, their earthly propension is liable to be encountered continually, not with fear only, but despair; and is therefore most vain, irrational, absurd, and tormenting to themselves:—vain, for it contributes nothing to their end; can any man's adhesion to this earth, be it never so peremptory, perpetuate, or prolong his abode upon it?—irrational, for what is there in this state itself, to be alleged as a plausible reason why one should desire it to be everlasting?—absurd, for it is to set one's heart upon a known impossibility. What can be more ludicrous, than to contend with necessity, which will at last be too hard for me; to cherish a desire in my soul, wherein I know I must at length be disappointed? And it cannot, in the issue, but be tormenting; and even in the foresight of it fear afflicts, but despair cannot do less than torment. How amazing is the forethought of being plucked away from one's dwelling-place; "rooted out from the land of the living!" Ps. lii. 5. An immortal spirit torn out of mortal flesh, unto which it is now, however, so inwardly con-naturalized, as to have no thought but with abhorrence, of any other state or dwelling! That one's soul should sit trembling on the lip, and muttering, "I fain would stay, but must go, and leave behind me whatsoever I loved best! and not only quit all my former known delights and wonts, but pass into unknown darkness and woes!" *Animula vagula blandula*, &c. (as he desperately,) "O my poor wandering, self-flattering soul, whither art thou going"—into what dismal, horrid places, where thou shalt not jest as thou wast wont? That a man should thus recount with himself; I have had my good things! My pleasant days are all over, never to return more! And now must I finish them by so violent a death! Driven away (as the wicked is said to be) out of light into darkness, and chased out of the world. John xviii. 5, 18. How calamitous is this case! And how much the more, that it scarce leaves room for a rational, or even for a religious pity. For we read in the mentioned Ps. lii. when we are told (*v.* 5) of God's plucking, and rooting such out of their dwelling-place, &c. that the righteous shall see and fear, and laugh at them. At once they reverence God and deride them, (*v.* 6,) and are justified herein, by what follows, *v.* 7. "Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness," *viz.* that he acted so foolish a part, in so plain a case; imagining that wealth and wickedness, in conjunction, could signify more than all the mercy and justice of a Deity; and did therefore that ridiculous thing, so deservedly to be laughed at by all that are wise and

just, as to attempt by so much earth to fill up the room of God! That a reasonable, and immortal mind should place its supreme desire upon a terrene good, from which it shortly must be plucked away, against the strongest reluctance! Veneration of the divine *nemesis* overcomes compassion in this case. Pity towards them is not extinguished, but its exercise suspended only, by religion towards God.

(5.) This temper of mind (which ought to signify with professed Christians) hath in it a downright repugnancy unto whole Christianity. For consider, and compare things. Here is a heart cleaving to this earth; but did Christ establish his religion to plant men in the earth? Was it not to prepare them for heaven, and then translate them thither? "He died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." 1 Pet. iii. 18. And "he hath redeemed us to God by his blood, (Rev. v. 9.)—and to deliver us from this present world." Gal. i. 4. His kingdom, in the whole constitution and frame of it, is avowedly not of this world; but terminates upon eternity, and an everlasting state. And, therefore, they that mind earthly things, are said to be enemies to the cross of Christ. Phil. iii. 18, 19. Their whole business is nothing else but fighting against, tilting at the cross! *i.e.* counteracting the design for which Christ was crucified. And can it enter into the imagination of any man, that hath not forfeited the repute of an intelligent creature, or quite lost his understanding; or (if he retain any thing of reason) that hath not abandoned his religion, to think, that the Son of God should come down from heaven, and die on earth, to counteract himself; or only to procure, that such as we might be rich men, be in friendship with this world, and enmity with God; here live, eat, drink, trade, gather wealth; and forget who made us, and redeemed us with his blood? Was this the end for which the world was to be Christianized, and Christianity set up among men; and for the founding whereof, the Head and Author of this profession died upon a cross? What an insolent absurdity is it in such as call themselves Christians, to live in so open, continual, and direct opposition to the very end for which Christ died!

(6.) And in the mentioned case, their very frame carries with it a direct opposition and contradiction to their own profession, *i.e.* supposing they live under the gospel, and profess the Christian religion. They fight not only against Christ, even dying, but themselves. And this is that which the apostle considers with so deep sense and tenderness in that mentioned, Phil. iii. 18, "There are some of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, they are enemies to the cross of Christ—they mind earthly things." But, in opposition to men of this character, he adds: "Our conversation is in heaven." All runs into

this at last, they that are Christians indeed have their conversation in heaven. I now tell you of these earthly-minded ones, even weeping, that they unchristian themselves! What compassion doth it challenge, to see men baptized into Christ's death; to behold immortal spirits united with bodies washed with pure water, therein renouncing this world, and all its pollutions, yet sunk into carnality! buried in flesh, where they should but dwell; living under the gospel, where life and immortality are brought to light, regardless of immortal life: afraid to die, yet void of any inclination to the way of living for ever, and *that* while they pretend to it; and do really love their death, which their profession obliges them to shun, and dread! Prov. viii. 36. So are they made up of contradictions, and inconsistencies with themselves! In the forementioned context, (Phil. iii.) the way, and course of walking, which the blessed apostle observed, and lamented with tears, was such as none of them that took it could be supposed to avow. They were not professed enemies to Christ and Christianity, of whom he complains. It could be no surprise to him, or strange thing, to see men practise according to their known principles. But that enmity to Christ, and his great design, should appear in the lives of Christians, pierced his very soul; and the more for what there follows:—

(7.) That their end will be destruction. For they were to be treated, and dealt with at last, not according to what they did falsely pretend, but what they truly were; besides, that their destruction naturally follows their earthly inclination. They have that death-mark upon them, which is also the true cause why they cannot live. All their designs, and inclinations terminate upon earth, that hath nothing in it that souls can live by; and they are enemies to the cross of Christ, *i. e.* to the design of his death thereon, in compliance wherewith stands their very life. For, "if they are crucified with him, they live." Gal. ii. 20. The love of this world must be deadly to them, excluding divine love, which is their life. In the same degrees wherein this world and all worldly lusts are crucified by the cross of Christ, (Gal. vi. 14,) their true life is renewed and improved. Who can think less is meant by saying so expressly, "to be carnally minded is death—to be spiritually minded is life and peace?" Rom. viii. 6. When death is consummate and finished, their lusts, grown mature, and wanting external objects, turn inward with most intense fury, as never-dying worms, on the miserable creature itself: here is the fulness of death!

(8.) Their destruction must be so much the more grievous for having lived under the gospel, where the state and the way of life are so plainly revealed. There God's design is laid open,

only to continue them under such a dispensation here, as the means of discovery, and operation, to reveal heaven to them, and prepare and fit them for the heavenly state, that they may seasonably be removed thither. But this would never enter into their hearts, while the amusements of their present earthly state have more powerfully diverted them, disposed them to dream and trifle away the precious hours of their gospel-day, rather than improve them to their proper end. To have their spirits remain unimpressed by the gospel, they have got nothing by it, of what is intended, and aimed at; to have lived so many years, twenty, thirty, forty years, or more under the gospel, and have got nothing of a correspondent frame to so glorious a ministration,—a gospel which calls men to God's eternal kingdom and glory, to be so defeated of its great design; how is this to be accounted for? That is the final term of this call, *viz.* "the eternal kingdom and glory of God." 1 Thess. ii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 10. He calls to repentance, faith, and holiness, and to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ: but the ultimate term of his calling is, his eternal kingdom and glory; and by Jesus Christ, as it is there expressed; and from the all, or fulness of grace; the God of all grace. But now, to have an ear invincibly deaf to this call, that stones might as well have been called to heaven, clogs of earth to turn themselves into stars, and fix themselves in the highest orbs; what a deplorable case is this! What serious heart would it not melt, and dissolve into tears, that from under such a gospel, souls should be dropping down into perdition continually, and we have no way to help it? And if this be a compassionable case to them that behold it, their misery is great that shall endure it!

Great, if we consider, how *great the salvation* was, which they neglected. Great, if it be considered how provoking the affront was to its great prime Revealer, as well as Author; *which began to be spoken by the Lord;* and the divine attestation afforded to the after-publishers, *being confirmed by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness.* Heb. ii. 3, 4. Whereupon it is demanded, how can the neglecters escape? Great, if we consider their odious, and ignominious comparison and preference of the vanities of this earth, to the divine and heavenly glory! And add, that they perish in sight of this glorious state; not far from the kingdom of God; having it in view!

2. Let us see, on the contrary hand, the blessedness of them whose hearts are supremely set upon the heavenly felicity; and who, therefore, only need patience, that they may wait till God sees fit to translate them to it. There are many things to be considered here:—

(1.) Their spirits are attempered to the heavenly state; hereupon they may daily reflect, and view the kingdom of God

begun within them; and live in a very pleasant, comfortable expectation, that the first-fruits will be followed by a blessed harvest; that the kingdom within them, consisting in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," (Rom. xiv. 17,) will issue in their being at last received into a most perfectly glorious kingdom; that he, who is working them for that self-same thing, (the state wherein mortality shall be swallowed up of life) hath given them the earnest of the Spirit, and thereby assured to them the inheritance itself. 2 Cor. v. 4, 5.

(2.) They feel, therefore, within themselves, that their patience is not indifference; much less that it imports aversion to the state they profess to be waiting for; that they love not this present world, and are not loath to leave it. Herein communing with themselves, they can appeal to the kind eye of their gracious Lord, and say, "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee:" and that with so superlative a love, that there is nothing in all this world which they would not willingly leave to be with him, as that which, for themselves, and considering their own interest only, they count to be best of all. Whereupon also, therefore,—

(3.) Their hearts will bear them this testimony, that their expectation with patience is understood, and designed by them, as their duty. They exercise it in compliance with the divine pleasure. They dare not prescribe to him about the time when he will take them up. He enables them patiently to wait, as having formed their hearts to a governable temper, and to be subject to the Father of spirits: and apprehending that as he is also peculiarly styled, the "God of the spirits of all flesh," it must belong to him to determine both what spirits shall sojourn in flesh, and what shall not; as also to limit the time of their abode there; how long they shall continue in that mean dwelling, and when they shall leave it. Conscience of duty, in this very case, is in itself a pleasant reflection, and sensation! Whence it appearing, that it is a matter of duty; this is further to be considered by them,—

(4.) That their very expectation itself will be rewarded; that since they were willing to wait, though they had real, vivid desires to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; and that their willingness to wait was not idle, but conjunct with a willingness also to serve him in this world, they shall have so much the more ample reward in heaven; their very heaven itself will be so much the more grateful; and they shall have so much the more abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom and glory. They may, therefore, encourage themselves from that consolatory exhortation of the apostle, (1 Cor. xv. 58,) "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know your labour shall

not be in vain in the Lord." And if no part of that work shall be in vain, nothing of it, according to that connexion which the grace of God hath settled between work and reward, shall be without its recompence; nor consequently any part of that time, in this our state of expectation, which we had for the doing of such work, shall pass without its relative consideration thereto; if only we had opportunity to give one cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple.

Therefore, to shut up all: let us now apply and bend ourselves to this one thing; to get into such a temper of soul, as that we may find, and feel we need patience to wait for the blessedness of heaven. If we do not sensibly need patience, we are dead, there is no life in us. If we live that life that tends towards God, and will end in eternal life, that life will have sense belonging to it, and that sense will make us feel our need of patience; we shall wait, not like stupid stocks, but like obedient children. And when we see this to be the genuine temper of a Christian spirit, how uneasy should it be to us not to be able to say, Blessed be God, it is our temper! Which, if we do find, our own sense not letting us doubt that upon the mentioned account we need patience, our next care must be that we have it; which will not exclude our feeling the need of it. For when we find, that, through the mercy of God, in some competent measure we have it, our sense of the need of it will not cease, *i. e.* we shall never account that we have it as an unnecessary, or needless thing. We shall, indeed, truly judge, with just gratitude, that we do not altogether want it; but shall apprehend we need it still, as that we cannot be without. Yea, and the more we have of it, and are under its dominion and possessive power, the more we shall apprehend its value and excellency, and how needful it is to us. But that when we feel our need, we may not be destitute of it, ought to be our great and very principal care. Nor are we to content ourselves with the mere self-indulgent opinion, that we have it laid up (as in a napkin) in the dull and lazy habit; but must take care that we have it in act and exercise; which is the express import of that apostolical exhortation, (James i. 4,) "Let patience have its perfect work," *q. d.* take care, not merely that you have the principle; as where one good and holy principle belonging to the new creature is, there all are; but that we have it in its present use and operation, or in an actual promptitude, and readiness for use and exercise, as the occasions that call for it shall occur; that then we be not, as men of might, that (though not supposed to want) cannot find their hands, *i.e.* have them not ready for present use.

Moreover, we are here also to consider, that though patience is needful, as that text imports, upon the account of mere absence, and expectation of the good, *i.e.* principally the final blessedness

contained in the promise; and that this alone is a true ground upon which patience is necessary, if we look upon the case abstractly, and *in thesi*, or in the theoric, and contemplation: yet when we come to the exercise of patience, we actually find no such case, wherein the expectation of this promised good is alone; but variously complicated with many other occasions, in this our present state, while we dwell in such a world, and in such bodies, that must increase our need of patience. For, taking the whole matter, as may be said, *in concreto*, and as comprehending all our present circumstances, we may be put to expect the promised good, under much suffering for the sake of Christ and a good conscience, as is signified in this context, *v.* 32—34. Enduring a great fight of afflictions—made gazing stocks, by reproaches on ourselves, and as the companions of others so used—suffering the spoiling of our goods, even our all, as to this world; so as nothing shall remain to us, but the (expected) better, the enduring heavenly substance. And we may thus be obliged to expect, amidst great bodily pains and languishings, the concussions and shakings of our earthly tabernacles, while, as yet, they come not down; the outward man daily perishing, but we know not how long it will be ere it actually perish; besides the more grievous distempers of the inward man, that not being so sensibly renewed, as with many it is not, day by day. 2 Cor. iv. 16. And thus, if we had no other burdens, we are burden enough to ourselves. Whereupon, the greater our need of patience is, the more earnestly we should endeavour for it. And we are to use very earnest endeavours in order hereto, both with God and with ourselves.

With *God*, by incessant prayer, as the God of all grace; that, as the apostle speaks in another instance, we may abound in this grace also. Another apostle, James, (*ch.* i. 4, 5,) speaks of this Christian excellency, under the name of wisdom. It is plain he so intends: for having (*v.* 4) given the exhortation, "Let patience have its perfect work," he subjoins, (*v.* 5,) "If any man lack wisdom,"—*i. e.* as is evident, this wisdom, patiently to acquiesce in the divine pleasure under whatsoever exercises, or of what continuance soever; than which no part of wisdom can be more necessary, or any thing more apparently wise. But we see what his further direction is upon that supposition, "If any man lack this wisdom, let him ask it of God," &c. Agreeably whereto he is pleased to be styled "the God of patience," (Rom. xv. 5,) to let us know, whither, in this apprehended and felt necessity, our great resort must be. And how kind and compassionate is the encouragement given in the following words of that former text, (Jam. i. 5,) that "he giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not;" is not apt to reproach frail creatures with the folly of their impatient frettings; but freely, upon their request,

to give them that composure of mind which may show them to be truly wise; and wherein their wisdom doth eminently consist. Moreover, we find that elsewhere experience is appealed to, for further encouragement, and as a demonstration of God's faithfulness, in this case, (1Cor. x. 13,) no temptation hath befallen you, but what is common to man, or incident to our present state, and for the bearing whereof you had divine support: and God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted, or tried, above what you are able, or beyond the ability which he will graciously afford you; but will, with the trial, make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it, *i.e.* such a way of escape, as will not avoid bearing, but consist with it; and wherein a vouchsafed ability to bear shall consist; so as that you come off unharmed, and without real hurt or prejudice. And since patience is this ability to bear, how reasonable is it, with a filial faith and confidence to supplicate for it!

Yet, as we are thus by fervent prayer, to strive and wrestle with God; it will argue we are grossly neglectful, or very ignorant of God's usual methods of communicating his gracious assistances, if also we do not, by proper and suitable means, strive and take pains with ourselves, that we may obtain what we pray for. And nothing can be more suitable to reasonable creatures, that are not to be wrought upon as stocks or stones, but as men, and Christians, capable of consideration and thought; and of such thoughts and considerations as God's own word, which we profess to believe, hath given ground for; of which considerations there are many, wherewith we should urge our own souls to the exercise of such patience as the present case calls for; *i.e.* while as yet we are to continue expectants, waiting his time for our receiving the promise. In this way we should therefore commune, and discourse this matter with ourselves: "Am not I God's creature, the work of his hands? Hath he not given me breath and being? Was it not for his pleasure, or by his will, that I, with the rest of his creatures, am, and was created? Did it not depend upon his will, whether I should be or not be, have any place in his creation, be any thing or nothing for ever? Did not his own free choice determine in what rank or order of creatures I should be placed; whether among frogs, toads, serpents, or men? Could I choose my place and station in the creation of God? How favourable a vouchsafement was it, that he made me a creature capable of thought, of design, of felicity, of immortality and eternal life, of receiving such a promise, as I am now expecting to be accomplished, and fulfilled unto me! What could be considered here, but the good pleasure of God's goodness? How impossible was it, that so arbitrary and royal bounty should be prescribed unto! And shall I not now wait with patience, for the final result and issue of it?"

But how overpowering a consideration should it be with me, to think, I am not only his creature, but one that had offended him, and how unexpressibly what I expect is above the condition of a revolted creature? One fallen from God in rebellion against him, and by nature a child of wrath! One engaged in the common conspiracy of the apostate sons of Adam, against their sovereign rightful Lord; that were agreed, in one sense, to say to God, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways;" and were all best pleased, to be as without God in the world! Whence is it to me, one of that vile, degenerate, rebellious crew! that a promise should be before me, and in view, pointed at me, (as it is to all who do not disbelieve or despise it) of entering into the blessed rest of God himself? Heb. iv. 1. Or, according to the nearer, and more immediate reference of the words we have in hand, (*ch.* x. 34,) of having in heaven the better, and enduring substance! And shall I not patiently wait for it? Why am I so over hasty to snatch at what I am but dutifully to receive; and with highest admiration of the rich grace of the glorious Giver?

Is the gift itself wholly in his power, and not the time? Did it not entirely depend upon his pleasure, to give, or not to give? And doth it not as much belong to him to determine when his gift shall take place? Is the substance in his choice, and not the circumstance? The thing itself was infinitely above expectation; and shall it now be grievous to expect the appointed time! There was a time, and state of things, when with me, an offender, an obstinate, impenitent rebel, no other expectation could remain, but of wrath, and fiery indignation. It is of mere gracious vouchsafement, that I comfortably expect at all; and shall I count it a hardship, that I am not presently told how long? And how relieving a thing should it be against the weariness of such an expectation, that so great a good is sure at last, *viz.* as that contained in the promise! For is not He faithful who hath promised? And hath he not so graciously condescended, as to add to his promise his oath, "that by two immutable things, by which it is impossible for God to lie, the heirs of promise might have strong consolation?" Heb. vi. 17, 18. And when this assurance is given to the heirs of promise, (*v.* 17,) *i.e.* to the regenerate; for if children then heirs, (Rom. viii. 17,) nothing can be surer than this, in the general, that all that are regenerate, or sincere Christians, shall inherit at one time or other. Nothing is left doubtful, but the time when, *i.e.* the time when they shall die. For they that die in Christ, are past danger. And the method is prescribed us of making our calling and election sure.

When, therefore, this is done, how great is the consolation, that one time or other I am sure to die! What can be surer?

It is not in the power of all the world, not of the greatest enemy I can have in it, to keep me always there, or hinder my going out of it at my appointed time. Such therefore our Saviour, under the name of his friends, (Luke xii. 4,) forbids to fear them that kill the body, and, after that, have no more that they can do: which is a triumph over the impotency of the utmost human malice against good men; the greatest hurt they have it in their power to do them, is to put it out of their own power ever to hurt them more; and to put them into the possession of the most blessed state!

This consideration, therefore, should, at once, both make us patient of death, when expected as an apprehended evil; and of the expectation of the consequent good, to which it is an appointed, unalterable introduction. Of death, as that which must intervene, and in reference whereto itself, we have need of patience, that we may inherit the promise. For that which is sown is not quickened, except it die. It is necessary we be reconciled to this wise, and equal law of our sovereign Lord, by which it is appointed for all men once to die:—that we be satisfied and well pleased, that this world be not continued always, for the production and sustenance of men born in sin; that rebels against Heaven are not to be everlastingly propagated here on earth; that God shall not thus perpetuate his own dishonours, and prevent the judgment that is to shut up this scene, and set all things right between him and his revolted creatures, after apt and suitable means used for their reduction and recovery. With how dutiful submission and complacency should we yield, for our parts, to this constitution; so as for ourselves, not to wish for an exemption. For how can we harbour a desire in our hearts, which we cannot form into a prayer? And how would such a prayer sound, "Lord, when all this world is to die round about me, let me be an excepted instance; let me live here always?" How presumptuous a request were it! And how foolish! For is not the course of God's procedure herein, from age to age, a constant avowing of the righteousness, and of the immutability of his counsel, in reference to it? It is a wretched thing to be engaged in a war with necessity made by righteousness itself, and the most invincible reason. A pagan, represented in the height of madness, was not so mad as not to see this, *Miser est quicunque non vult, mundo secum moriente, mori;* "that he is a wretched creature, that is unwilling to die, when the world is every where dying with him!" Our patience, possessing our souls, will not endure there should be such a *pugna*, a reluctant disposition not overcome, against this inviolable statute and determination; which disposition must be equally disloyal to our Maker, and uncomfortable to ourselves.

And this consideration should make us patient in expecting the

consequent good, whereto death is the introduction; that the expected good is so ascertained to the friends of Christ, that death intervening cannot be hurtful, or be any bar to our attainment of the good promised; nor is rationally formidable; since we cannot suppose our Lord would forbid our fearing what we have reason to fear. But unto his friends he forbids the fearing of them that can kill the body only, and after that, have no more that they can do: but requires them to fear him that can cast soul and body into hell. It is plainly implied, that killing the body is no hurt or damage to the soul; it cannot separate from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. viii. 38, 39. No, nor the principalities and powers which, in that juncture, in the very article, or instant of dying, will be sure to do their uttermost to work that separation. And considering this bodily death as an introduction to blessedness, it not only can infer no damage, but it must be our great advantage: which is implied in the mentioned context, Luke xii. 8, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will the Son of man confess before the angels of God." For though it is not the lot of every Christian to be an actual martyr; yet every true Christian is an habitual one. Whosoever, therefore, dies with a fixed disposition of spirit never upon any terms to deny Christ, he assures such he will solemnly own them, even before all the angels; which must include their being admitted into a most blessed state. When also such are expressly told, that all things are theirs, (1 Cor. iii. 21, 22,) and *death* is reckoned into the account of the *all things*, this cannot but signify that death is to be, not only no detriment to them, but their advantage and gain; which is also plainly spoken out, (Phil. i. 21,) "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." And that most gainful good being so fully assured to them, they have all the reason in the world to expect it with patience.

Moreover, how consolatory must it be to them that have any taste of spiritual and heavenly things, that so pleasant a way is prescribed them of living, through the whole time of their expecting state, *i. e.* as long as they live in the flesh, *viz.* to live by faith in the Son of God. Gal. ii. 20. How unspeakable is the joy and pleasure of that way of living! That all the days of our abode in the flesh, we have so great a one as the glorious, ever-blessed Son of God to depend upon; by continual, and often-repeated vital acts, resigning ourselves to his conduct and government; and deriving from that fulness, which it pleased the Father should dwell in him, all needful supplies of grace, Spirit, life, and righteousness; and that we are taught to consider him, not as a stranger, or one unrelated to us, or unconcerned for us; but who hath loved us, and (which is the highest evidence hereof) given himself for us, that great, rich, and

glorious self! In whom, therefore, our faith may not only repose, and acquiesce, but triumph and glory! And that we may do thus, not by rare, unfrequent, and long intermitted intervals; but as long as we breathe in mortal flesh, even to the last breath! Should such a way of living be tedious, and irksome to us? Though we expect long, we are not to expect, as forlorn creatures, without Christ, and without hope, and without God in the world! Therefore, in how high transports of spirit should we exult, and bless God, who hath so stated our case: endeavouring to our uttermost, and earnestly aspiring to that excellent temper of spirit, (Col. i. 11, 12,) "to be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience, and longsuffering, with joyfulness, giving thanks."— And how overpowering a consideration should this be with us! What! am I to aim at that high pitch of all patience, and longsuffering with joyfulness; and, instead of repining to give thanks; and have I not attained so far, as to meet patience? My not being able to endure the enjoined expectation, should make me not endure myself!

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING SOME MEMORIAL OF

DOCTOR HENRY SAMPSON,

A LATE NOTED PHYSICIAN IN THE CITY OF LONDON.

ALTHOUGH the foregoing discourse is grounded upon the same text of Scripture that was insisted on soon after the notice was brought to me of this worthy person's decease, and upon the occasion thereof; yet this discourse itself, cannot admit to be called a funeral sermon. The frequent and inward conversation I had with him, divers years, gave me ground to apprehend that the temper and complexion of his mind and spirit did very much agree with the sense and import of this text; which, when I heard of his death, first led my thoughts to it; and was my inducement to say something of it in public, with some particular reference to him, in whom I had seen an exemplification of it in an eminent degree. But of what was then said, I could now give no distinct account. For, having then no thought of its further publication, and my own long languishings presently ensuing, what was spoken upon that occasion, was with me lost. Nor was it afterwards decent to offer at publishing a sermon for the funeral of one, though very dear to me, that was deceased so long before. Yet God affording me, at length, some respiration from the extremity of those painful distempers that had long afflicted me; apprehending, that a discourse upon this subject might be of some use to divers others besides the present hearers, I did, by intervals, set myself to reconsider it: and only now take this occasion to annex some memorial of this excellent person, that first drew my thoughts to it. He was long a member, and lived in communion with many of us, in the same church, *viz.* by the space of thirty years, under the pastoral inspection of the Reverend Doctor Jacomb, and of him who, with great inequality, succeeded him. This he signified himself, in a paper written by his own hand, and delivered to me when we

were entering upon the administration of the Lord's supper, the last time that God ordered him that opportunity with us. The paper was thus:

Sir,

It is my request to you, that you will please to acquaint the congregation with the great sense I have of the mercy of God, that hath afforded me communion with them, and their ministry, for thirty years together. But now, being, by the providence of God, deprived of my health in the city, I am to seek relief thereof in the country air, and shall thereby be in a great measure deprived of those blessings; yet I earnestly desire their prayers for me, and my family, that, in some sort of such intercourse, our communion may continue still, if not in body, yet in spirit;

Your servant,

HENRY SAMPSON.

He now found himself constrained by his declining age, and growing distempers, to retire from us (but not without very great reluctancy) into a village at no great distance from the city; but which, for change of air, was necessary, and, as he found, relieving to him. From thence his earnest desire to visit his relations, and native country, engaged him in a long journey, as far as Nottinghamshire. And that journey brought him into the better, even the heavenly country; God so ordering it, that near the place where he drew his first breath, he should draw his last; and end a very holy, useful life, not far from the very spot where he began to live. For reaching the seat of a reverend brother of his, near to that of his birth, he there found, but for a very few days, a temporal, and there entered upon his eternal, rest. So falling a little short of the *patrias sedes*, the place that had been the dwelling-place of his earthly parents, by a joyful anticipation he sooner arrived at his heavenly Father's house, and found his place among the many mansions, and everlasting habitations, where was to be his proper and perpetual home. It is not now my design to write the history of his life; the former part, and therefore, the longer course and tract whereof, must have been more known to divers of our society, than it could be to me; though I have had much opportunity also, within the space of twenty years past, to understand, and know much of it. But that must contain many things, which, though useful in their kind, my circumstances allow me not to relate. Nor shall I enlarge in giving his character, though the subject is copious; for my present infirmities will make my limits narrow, whether I will or no.

But a man of real value, and usefulness in his station, and of so instructive and exemplary a conversation, ought not to be neglected, or be let slide off the stage from among us, without some such observation, as may some way answer a debt owing to his memory; and be a real gain and advantage to ourselves.

He began his course, favoured by the Author of nature with very good natural parts; and very early enriched with communications of the more excellent kind, by the God of all grace. Herewith, having his spirit seasoned, and deeply tinctured betimes, the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, became, near the beginning of his course, the governing principle thereof. His choice was, therefore, of that way and state, wherein he, in the general, conceived he might most glorify God, and do most good to men. And because he thought he might serve those ends best, in that high and noble employment, wherein he should be obliged principally, and most directly, to intend the saving of men's souls, thither he more immediately bent and directed his preparatory endeavours.

And, therefore, though in his academical studies, wherein he spent several years, he neglected no part of that rational learning which was most fitly conducing and serviceable to this his purpose; yet he most earnestly applied himself to the gaining a thorough acquaintance with those languages wherein the holy Scriptures were originally written; and spared no cost to procure great variety of the best and most celebrated editions of both the testaments, with other helps, for the attaining of that most necessary knowledge; whereof his library, so richly furnished in that kind, did appear, after his decease, a full evidence; to the bettering of divers other libraries, of such as he had formerly been wont to hear, and among them, as I must with gratitude acknowledge, by his special kindness and bequest, my own. Accordingly this had been his calling, if the way of managing it could as much have been the matter of his choice, guided by his judgment and conscience, as the calling itself had been.

But things falling out, in this respect, otherwise, before he could solemnly enter upon it; he seasonably diverted from it, to that which he had judged the next best; and wherein the persons of men were still to be the objects of his care:—things of higher excellency than lands and riches; as life and the body are, by the verdict of our Saviour, of more worth than their perquisites, food, and raiment, unto which ample estates and revenues are but more remotely subservient. And the vicinity of this to that other most excellent calling, is so near, that it is an easy step from it to the affairs of the other: which we see exemplified in that excellent person, a dear and most worthy

relative of the deceased (Dr. Grew); unto whose historical account of him, subjoined to this discourse, I refer the reader for fuller information; whose most useful and elaborate works may not only occasion us to consider theology as every one's business; or the calling of a divine, as in some respect transcendental, and running through every man's calling; but that of a physician, as more nearly allied to it than any other; and many excellent speculations being common, and, as those works show, of great importance to both: and, in which performance that accurate writer doth not, indeed, preach to the vulgar; but instructs preachers. And, as it hath been sometime thought a greater thing to make a king than to be one, he hath attained a higher degree above being, himself, one single preacher, in doing that, whereby now, and in future time, he may contribute to the making of many.

These are some instances, and blessed be God, it is to be hoped there are others, which show, that *religio medici* is not always opprobrious, or a note of ignominy and reproach; and that a "beloved physician," on the best account, was not peculiar to the first age. That calling gives very great opportunity to a man of a serious spirit, of doing good to men's souls; and I know it hath been improved by some, to discourse and to pray with their dying patients; and when their art could not immortalize their bodies, they did all that in them lay, for the saving their immortal souls. And this, I have reason to think, was a great part of the practice of this worthy man. In the proper business of this calling, he sincerely studied the good of mankind; endeavouring to his utmost, to lengthen out their time in this world, in order to their further preparation for the other. And herein his skill was not unequal to his sincerity; nor his charity to his skill; for being applied to, upon no former acquaintance, when the cases of extreme illness, and extreme poverty have met together, he hath most cheerfully embraced the opportunity of doing such good; declaring he was ready as well to serve the poor, when he was to receive nothing, as the rich, from whom he might expect the largest fees: his visits have been there repeated with equal constancy and diligence. He equally rejoiced in the success of such endeavours, whereof he had no other recompence than the satisfaction of having relieved the distressed and the miserable. And of such, some do survive him, to whom the remembrance of his name is still grateful and dear. Nor were the great advantages lost, which he had gained for the instructing a congregation; (had the state of things, and his judgment concurred thereto) for they eminently appeared to such as had the privilege of living under his roof, and of partaking in the instructions which his great acquaintance with the holy Scriptures enabled him to give them from time to

time: which, together with his daily fervent prayers, and holy conversation, made his family as a well-ordered, and a watered garden, compared with the howling wildernesses of too many others.

But in all my conversation with him, nothing was more observable, or more grateful to me, than his pleasant and patient expectation of the blessed state which he now possesses: the mention whereof would make joy sparkle in his eye, and clothe his countenance with cheerful looks; accompanied with such tokens of serenity, and a composed temper of mind, as showed and signified submission, with an unreluctant willingness to wait for that time, which the wisdom and goodness of God should judge seasonable for his removal out of a world which he loved not; nor yet could disaffect, from any sense of its unkindness to him, but only from the prospect he had of a better. Which made me think him a fit example of what is treated of in the foregoing discourse.

THE WORTHY

DOCTOR GREW'S ACCOUNT

OF HIS EXCELLENT

BROTHER-IN-LAW.

Doctor Henry Sampson was the son and heir of a religious gentleman, Mr. William Sampson, of South Leverton, in Nottinghamshire: and nephew to those two eminent linguists, Mr. John and Mr. Samuel Vicars, the joint authors of the "Decapla on the Psalms." In his minority, he was first under the government of his most virtuous mother. Upon her re-marriage of his father-in-law, the very reverend Doctor Obadiah Grew, of Coventry, he was by him committed, at the age of fifteen, to the tutorage of Mr. William Moses, then fellow, and some time after the learned and worthy master of Pembroke Hall in Cambridge: under whom, his proficiency was such, as preferred him to be the moderator of his year. So soon as he was of sufficient standing, he was chosen fellow of the same Hall: and, not long after, had one of the best livings in the gift of the college bestowed upon him, *viz.* that of Framlingham, in Suffolk. Here he was, when he published that correct edition of the learned Thesis of Mr. Thomas Parker, entitled, "Methodus Divinæ Gratiæ," &c. a golden book, with a golden epistle of his own prefixed to it; both of them having a great deal of weight in a little room. While he continued here, he made several visits to Coventry, where he often preached for the doctor, his father-in-law, with great acceptation, as well as among his own people; in both which places his name is as a precious ointment, and his memory had in honour unto this day. Upon the restoration of King Charles, being obliged to leave his people, he resolved, as well because he was never ordained, as for some other reasons, to qualify himself for the practice of physic. In order whereunto, having visited several universities, famous for medicine, abroad, he stayed first at Padua, and then at Leyden, for some time: in the latter of which he became very well acquainted

with that eminent person, the Lord Chief Justice St. John, who bore a singular respect to him as long as he lived. Having here taken his degree, he returned home and settled in this city: where also, for order's sake, he entered himself of the college of physicians, as an honorary fellow; among the members whereof he justly obtained the repute of being substantially learned in all the parts of his profession. Besides other improvements he aimed at, he laid up a considerable treasure of observations made of diseased bodies, dissected with his own hand. Nor did he lose any of his spare hours; as appears by many historical papers relating to theology, left behind him. All which, though they have been long suppressed, partly through his own great modesty, and partly the infirmities of his latter years, which permitted him to finish but few, if any of them; yet it is hoped, that some of both kinds, may ere long see the light. His reading and speculation were ever in order unto action. By which means, as he became, under all relations, in every station of his life desirable and exemplary unto others; so he enjoyed the happiness of continual peace within. And, as he lived, he died; his last hours being very composed, and concluding with that εὐθανασία, "euthanasia," for which he had often prayed.

THE CARNALITY

OF

RELIGIOUS CONTENTION:

IN TWO SERMONS,

PREACHED AT THE MERCHANTS' LECTURE, IN BROAD STREET.

THE PREFACE TO THE READERS.

This title, nobody can think, is meant to condemn all contention about matters of religion as carnal; but since there is too much which is apparently so, it only signifies it to be the design of the following discourse to show what contention that is, and when, or in what case, though it hath religion for its object, it may not have it for its principle; but that very frequently, the lust of the flesh hides itself under that specious name: and to show wherein, while it affects to hide, yet unawares it discovers itself in the management of affairs of that sacred kind. Thus it often really is; and then is that noble cause as ignobly served, as when, (according to that father's observation) a man proves to be unfaithful even for the faith, and sacrilegious for religion. *Cypr. de Simplicit. Præl.*

When in one place, (Jude 3,) Christians are exhorted to contend earnestly for the faith; and in another, (2 Tim. ii. 24,) we are told the servant of the Lord must not strive; it is plain there is a contention for religion which is a duty, and there is a contention, even concerning religion too, which is a sin. And that sin the apostle, in this context, out of which our discourse arises, doth deservedly expose by the name of flesh, and of the lust, or of the works thereof; such as wrath, variance, envy, hatred, &c. Whence it is easy to collect in what sense it is said in the mentioned place, the servant of the Lord must not strive, *viz.* as that striving excludes the gentleness, the aptness to instruct, and the patience, which are in the same place enjoined, where that striving is forbidden. And from thence it is equally easy to collect, too, in what sense we ought to contend for the faith earnestly, *i. e.* with all that earnestness which will consist with these, not with such as excludes them: as earnestly as you

will, but with a sedate mind, full of charity, candour, kindness, and benignity towards them we strive with. We ought, we see (in the mentioned place) to be patient towards all men. Towards fellow Christians there should certainly be a more peculiar brotherly kindness.

The difference is very great, and most discernible in the effects, between the church's contentions against enemies without it, and contentions within itself. The former unite it the more, increase its strength and vigour. The latter divide and enfeeble it. As to those of this latter kind, nothing is more evident, or deserves to be more considered, than that as the Christian church hath grown more carnal, it hath grown more contentious; and as more contentious, still more and more carnal. The savour hath been lost of the great things of the gospel, which have less matter in them of dispute or doubt, but which only did afford proper nutriment to the life of goodness; and it hath diverted to lesser things, (or invented such as were, otherwise, none at all) about which the contentious, disputative genius might employ, and wherewith it might entertain, feed, and satiate itself.

Thereby it hath grown strong and vigorous, and acquired the power to transform the church from a spiritual society, enlivened, acted, and governed by the Spirit of Christ, into a mere carnal thing, like the rest of the world. Carnality hath become, and long been in it a governing principle, and hath torn it into God knows how many fragments and parties; each of which will now be the church, enclose itself within its own peculiar limits, exclusive of all the rest, claim and appropriate to itself the rights and privileges which belong to the Christian church in common, yea, and even Christ himself, as if he were to be so enclosed or confined; and hence is it said, Lo! here is Christ, or there he is, till he is scarce to be found anywhere, but as, through merciful indulgence, overlooking our sinful follies, he is pleased to afford some tokens of his presence both here and there. Yet also how manifest are the tokens of his displeasure and retirement! And how few will apprehend and consider the true cause! I will now adventure to offer these things to serious consideration.

1. Whether for any party of Christians to make unto itself other limits of communion than Christ hath made, and hedge up itself within those limits, excluding those whom Christ would admit, and admitting those whom he would exclude, be not in itself *a real sin?* When I say *make to itself*, this more peculiarly concerns those who form their own communions, having nothing herein imposed upon them by civil authority. Let others censure themselves as they see cause. They have a holy table among them, the symbol of their communion with one another in the Lord. I would ask, "Whose is this table? Is it the table of this or that man? or party of men? or is it the Lord's table?" Then certainly it ought to be free to his guests, and appropriate to them. And who should dare to invite others, or forbid these?

2. If it be a sin, is it not *a heinous one?* This will best be understood by considering what his limits are. Nothing seems plainer

than that it was his mind, Christianity itself should measure the communion of Christians, as such: visible Christianity their visible communion. It will here then be inquired, (as in all reason it should) what Christianity is? And if it be, every one will understand the inquiry concerning that, as they would concerning any thing else, what is its essence, or what are its essentials, or wherein doth it consist? not what are all the several accidents it may admit of, as you would do, if it were inquired, What is humanity? Now here it will be readily acknowledged, that Christianity (as all things else that are of moral consideration) must be estimated more principally by its end, and that its final reference is not to this world, but to the world to come, and to a happy state there: and that, considering the miserable state wherein it finds the souls of men here, and the greater misery they are hereafter liable to, it must design their present recovery, and finally, their eternal salvation:—that in order hereto it must propound to men some things necessary to be believed, some things necessary to be done; and that both must intend the making of them good in order to the making them happy, or the saving of them from eternal misery:—that both are sufficiently propounded by the kind and great Author of this constitution, Christ himself, in his word or gospel:—that this gospel, besides many incidental things, expressly represents some things as of absolute necessity to salvation, by which are settled the very terms of life and death unto sinners, and as a principal, most comprehensive, and most fundamental thing to all the rest, requires men's resigning and subjecting themselves unto him, or putting themselves by solemn covenant into his hands, or under his conduct, to be by him brought to God, and made finally happy in him.

Whatsoever, therefore, is of absolute necessity to this end, is essential to Christianity. Christians, then, are a sort of men tending to God and blessedness under the conduct of Christ, to whom they have by covenant devoted themselves, and to God in him. Visible Christians are such as are in this visible tendency, with their children yet in minority, and not capable of making an understanding profession themselves. Such as have arrived to that capacity are no longer to be considered in their parents, but apart by themselves. They that have been sufficiently instructed in the principles of the Christian religion, that have devoted themselves to God in Christ, and live in their general course conformably to his holy rules, are visibly personal covenanters. It is plainly the mind of Christ, that those be received into that plenary communion which belongs to the Christian state; and particularly, unto that sacred rite which is the communion of his body and blood, and wherein the new testament or covenant hath its solemn obligation, and wherein as *fœderati*, or *persons in covenant*, they have more express communion with him and one another.

They that are yet unacquainted with the most necessary things of Christian religion, are to be held as catechumens under instruction, if they be willing. They that live licentiously, in the state of penitents, till they give that proof of their serious repentance, as that their pro-

fession thereof appear not to be slight and ludicrous. They that refuse to learn, or be reformed; that live in open hostility against the known laws of Christ, are not visible Christians, are not visibly in the way of salvation. Visible subjection and visible rebellion are inconsistencies. If, therefore, any society of men, professedly Christian, do make other limits of their communion; admitting those that Christ's rule excludes, excluding them whom it would admit; especially, if the alteration be, not only by the making those things necessary which he hath not revealed nor enjoined as necessary, but which he hath not revealed or enjoined at all; and so is not only to add to Christian religion taken at large, but even to its essentials; this is substantially to change the evangelical covenant, to make it another thing, to break Christ's constitution, and set up another. If they be little things only that we add, we must know there is *nihil minimum* in religion. What, if as little as they are, many think them sinful, and are thereby thrown off from our communion! The less they are, the greater the sin to make them necessary, to hang so great things upon them, break the church's peace and unity by them, and of them to make a new gospel, new terms of life and death, a new way to heaven: and is as much as in us lies, to make things of highest necessity depend not only upon things of no necessity, but that are, in our religion, perfect nullities, not having any place there at all; and, thereupon, is in effect to say, If you will not take Christianity with these additions of ours, you shall not be Christians, you shall have no Christian ordinances, no Christian worship; we will as far as in us is, exclude you heaven itself, and all means of salvation. And upon the same ground upon which they may be excluded one communion by such arbitrary, devised measures, they may be excluded another also, and be received nowhere. And if their measures differ, they all exclude one another; and hence, so many churches, so many Christendoms. If this be sinful, it is a sin of the deepest dye. Whereas the Holy Scriptures speak with such severity, as we know they do, of the altering of man's landmarks, what may we think of altering God's? And the sin is still the greater, if the things of highest necessity are overlooked in the meantime as trifles; tithing of mint is stood upon, but judgment, faith, mercy, and the love of God passed over, (as Matt. xxiii. 23; Luke xi. 42.) Infidels poured in upon the church; wolves and bears under the name of sheep; and the lambs of Christ, (which he requires to be fed) thrown out into the wilderness!

3. But if we suppose it a sin, and so heinous a one, *how far doth the guilt of it spread!* How few among the several sorts and parties of Christians are innocent, if the measures of their several communions were brought under just and severe examination! How few that lay their communions open to visible Christians as such, excluding none of whatsoever denomination, nor receiving any that by Christian rational estimate cannot be judged such.

4. *How few that consider this as the provoking cause of Christ's being so much a stranger to the Christian church!* And how little is it to be hoped we shall ever see good days till this wasting evil be

redressed! Or that our glorious Redeemer, who is head of all things to the church, should ever own it by visible favours, should protect, cherish, enlarge it, or make it spread in the world, (and how little it is naturally in any probability of doing so) or that he should treat it as his, while it is so little itself, and so little one! In the present (most deplorable) state of things, private, (that is carnal,) interest is the thing every where designed, by one party and another; and by wishing the prosperity of the church, or endeavouring it, is only meant seeking the prosperity of our own party. So that there can be no united prayers, nor joint endeavours for any truly common good; but what seems desirable to some, is dreaded and deprecated by all the rest. Thus for thirteen or fourteen hundred years hath the church been gradually growing a multiform, mangled, shattered, and most deformed thing; broken and parcelled into nobody knows how many several sorts of communions. The measures whereof how strangely alien have they been from those which were genuine and primitive, *i. e.* from substantial Christianity, and the things that must concur to make up that. Instead of sound knowledge of the few, clear, and great things of religion, a great many doubtful opinions; the taking one side in a disputed point; the determination of a logical question, understanding, or saying one understands (whether we do or no) a metaphysical nicety; and sometimes professing to believe somewhat that Scripture never said, or shows itself never to have meant, and that is most manifestly contrary to all reason and common sense. Instead of reverent, decent, grave worship; affected, scenical, ludicrous formalities, uncouth gesticulations, disguised countenances, with I know not what empty shows of a forced and feigned devotion; which things also were to serve instead of orderly, unreprovable conversation, of serving God, and of doing good to other men: and to expiate the crimes of a very bad one; to make amends, and atone for the lewdest, the most licentious, and most mischievous practices.

In sum; not only are things most alien from real Christianity added to it, but substituted in the room of it, and preferred before it. Yea, and things most destructive of it, indulged and magnified in opposition to it. This is too generally the state of the carnalized Christian church. And never were there more fervent contentions among all sorts, whose notions, opinions, modes, and forms are to be preferred.

The word of God tells us that to be carnally minded is death. These contests seem, therefore, to express great solicitude how most neatly to adorn a carcass, or at best how with greatest art and curiosity to trim, and apparel gorgeously, a languishing man, in the feared approaches of death, instead of endeavouring to save his life. But if any endeavour to that purpose were yet to be used, what should it be? that any man should go about to propose to the Christian church, were both presumptuous and hopeless. We can only speak our wishes to men, and offer them in solemn supplications to God. And it were a happy omen, if good men could once agree

what, in particular, to pray for; it being out of question that such men would not be guilty of so much hypocrisy, as to their uttermost not seriously to endeavour what they durst adventure, and thought it necessary, to make the subject of their prayers. And one would think it should not be difficult to men of sincere minds, upon serious consideration of the present sad state of things, not only in general to pray for the true spiritual welfare of the church of Christ in the world; but so far to be particular, as to pray, in order thereto, that it may be more entirely one. We are told, "There is one body, and one Spirit." Eph. iv. 4. That the Spirit is but one, we are sure is true in fact: and so we are that the body animated by that Spirit, as it is such, can be but one also. But the apostle's business in that place, is not merely to assert such a union as there already was, but also to persuade to such a one as there yet was not; *i. e.* that it might be more entire and complete than hitherto it was; and that such a unity might be preserved in the bond of peace; and this in order to its growth to the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ; implying plainly enough that the less it was one, the less it would grow. Which also is sufficiently evident in itself. For it is first plain, in the nature of the thing, that by how much it is more divided and multiform, it will appear the less considerable in the world, and so be less apt to attract, and draw in others. Yea, and its appearance and aspect will not only be less inviting and attractive; but it will be offensive, and create prejudices in the minds of men against Christianity itself. Which appears the plain meaning of that petition of our blessed Lord, when he was leaving the world, (John xvii. 21,) "That they all might be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me:" implying manifestly, that if they did not appear one, it would strongly tempt the world to infidelity. Whereupon all good men have a mighty inducement to unite in this request for more entire visible oneness in the Christian church, not only from the example of our Lord leading them in this request, but from the reason also by which he enforces it, that otherwise the rest of the world must be confirmed and obdured in their infidelity. Who sees not, therefore, that the Christian interest is naturally obstructed in its extensive growth by the visible disunion of the Christian community? For it can scarce admit to be called a society in its present torn and shattered state.

And again, its divisions being (as they cannot be other than) criminal, the effect of indulged carnality, and designed to serve the carnal interest of this or that party, in opposition to the rest; they hereby not only offend and give scandal to the world, who thereupon discern nothing of peculiar excellency in the Christian profession, when under it they see men driving but such low designs, as they themselves (more honestly) do without any such veil; but they offend the Spirit of Christ too, who thereupon, in great degrees, withdraws itself; not totally, which could not consist with the promise, "I am with you always, unto the end of the world;" but unto such degrees

as shall testify displeasure. Matt. xxviii. 20. And hence is the growth of the church obstructed, not only naturally, but penally too. Whence it is most evident, that they cannot with judgment pray for the spiritual welfare of the church of Christ, who pray not for its union; nor with sincerity, who to their utmost endeavour it not also. Nor can there be true seriousness, insomuch, but the consideration must ensue, what course is most likely to serve so desired an end? And since necessary things are most plain, and less liable to dispute and doubt; and it is matter of fact, obvious to every observing eye, that the disceptations and divisions in the Christian church, which are, and have been, from age to age, do for the most part arise from the addition of unnecessary things to it, which belong not to its constitution; and which, while some think lawful only, and at best but an ornament to it, others think sinful and a deformity; it cannot hence but appear a thing much to be desired, and endeavoured, that these occasions of offence and division might cease, and be removed. Which even they that think such additions to be, for the matter of them, lawful, might yet see reason enough to desire and to endeavour should be taken away; yea, though they apprehend them of some use; it being so manifest that the hurt which accrues by them is unspeakably more. And besides, one would think it should not be unapprehensible to any man that allows himself the free use of his thoughts, that though he should continue of the judgment that such additions were in the matter of them lawful, yet the making them additional terms of Christian communion must be highly sinful, as being the introduction of a new Christianity:—Christian communion being of Christians as such.

But this amputation is, according to the present posture of men's minds all the Christian world over, a thing equally to be desired and despaired of; as a general union therefore is, in the meantime. We cannot unite with them who insist upon terms of union that we judge unlawful in those things. For those that insist upon terms that we think not simply unlawful, while yet they are different, in several Christian societies; we cannot, therein, unite with any; but we must, for aught we know, divide from as many. That only which the present state of things admits of, is, that we keep ourselves united in mind and spirit with all serious Christians, in the plain and necessary things wherein they all agree.—That we preserve in our own spirits a resolved unaddictedness to any party, in the things wherein they differ.—That for actual and local communion (which we cannot have with all the Christians in the world, and can have comparatively but with a few) we join with them that come nearest us, *i. e.* that we judge come nearest to our common rule.—That (as some means hereto) we especially labour to centre in some such scheme of doctrinals, as for which all these profess to have a common reverence; that while our union cannot as yet be so extensive as it ought, it may be as extensive as we can; that the gospel be not hindered, and that our ministry may be the more successful and profitable to the promoting of the common salvation, among those that attend upon it. Such schemes or collections of doctrines, reduced into an order (as gold formed into a

vessel, whereas truth as it lies in the holy Scriptures is as gold in the mass) may be of use (as they have always been used in the church in all ages) more distinctly to inform others concerning our sentiments (though the use is less, that after thorough search and inquiry they can be of to one's self) provided, they be avowed to be looked upon, but as a *mensura mensurata*, reserving unto the Scriptures the honour of being the only *mensura mensurans;* and so that we only own them as agreeable to the Scriptures. And again, that we declare we take them to be agreeable thereto in the main, or for substance, without attributing a sacredness to the very words of a mere human composition; which indeed we cannot attribute to the words used in the translation of the Bible itself.—And that for the things, we believe them with a degree of assent proportionable to their greater or less evidence. This, through the blessing of God, such as have used a sincere and ingenuous freedom one with another, have found an effectual expedient to deliver their minds from mutual doubt concerning each other, that because of some different modes of expressing their sentiments, they held very different opinions, which they have found to be a mistake on one hand and the other; and have given and received satisfaction; they intended nothing that ought to be reckoned into the account of Socinian, Pelagian, Popish, Arminian, or Antinomian errors: that fraudulent or unjust way of making the estimate being justly exploded, that whosoever shall, in some things that touch not the main points of difference, say as some other of these do, must therefore be of their minds throughout; which rule of judging would make any Christian be taken for a Jew, a Mahometan, or a pagan; there being no intelligent Christian, but must say many things that they do. But it is to be hoped this engine of the devil's is by the mercy of God broken, so as that the people shall be no more frighted from attending to the ministry of such (be their denomination what it will) as use apt and proper methods to awaken, convince, and save souls, by being told they are Antinomians or Arminians, &c., it being upon inquiry found, that persons so and so charged by the rash folly of some that understand nothing of the difference, besides the different sound of those odious names, do really detest the doctrines imputed to them.—And that furthermore, while we look upon an agreement therein as a sufficient character of one sound in the faith, we do not profess to reckon every one of the things therein contained (without distinguishing their importance) necessary to that purpose: and do never intend our communion shall be limited by other bounds than only an agreement in those things for doctrinals, which we take to be of such importance and necessity, as without the belief whereof a man cannot be a sincere Christian. Which certainly cannot but be a very few, less disputed things, among them that profess to believe the divine authority of the Scriptures, and that will allow them to be interpreted according to the ordinary ways of interpreting other writings.—That for matters of practice in the worship of God, we be satisfied, not to be obliged to do things which we think unlawful ourselves, without entertaining the least surmise but that many good men may judge some things lawful that we do not, and

may practise accordingly.—That we always keep ourselves in a prepared temper of spirit to receive further information about doubtful things.—That we cherish in our souls a universal sincere love to Christians as such; and to men as men.—That we studiously endeavour in our several stations the doing the most general good we can.—And that our whole design do terminate upon what, so far as we can succeed in it, must be acknowledged by all good men to be a real service to the church of Christ, by gathering into it as many as we can, considering it as made up of persons that with judgment, and in practice, own the very substance of Christian religion. With such dispositions of mind as these, we shall, in this divided state of the Christian church, be innocent of the sinful evil of its divisions, and keep as much as in us is, the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And do we yet entertain in our minds any hope that the Christian religion shall spread, and be more generally propagated through the world? Or do we desire it should? Or do we dread that it should not, through our default? Let us then look back to the years of ancient time, and consider what it was when it grew and increased mightily; when without other advantages than its own self-recommending excellency, it every where made its own way, subdued nations, proselyted enemies, defied the most fervent oppositions and persecutions; when the professors and preachers of it triumphed over martyrdoms, the fierceness and fury of wild beasts and flames, overcame by the blood of Jesus, and the word of his testimony, not loving their lives unto the death: when as Pliny (*Plin. Epist.*) writing to Trajan in favour of the Christians, intimates to him they were every where so increased both in cities and countries, that the pagan temples had lain almost quite desolate, and that there had scarce been any to buy of their sacrifices: when (about a hundred years after) Tertullian representing, in apology for them, their peaceableness, and how easy it were, otherwise, to them to relieve themselves of their sufferings, says they were become so numerous in the empire, (*Apol. contra Gent.*) that if it were possible for them to withdraw themselves into some remote, obscure place, they who were left would even tremble at their own solitude. Christianity was then all life and spirit. The Christian church in those days flourished in purity, power, and vigour. But when, for the space of about three hundred years together, it had enjoyed the protection and benignity of Christian emperors; and was hereby become wanton, lost in carnality, not content with itself, and its own native comeliness, but affected to shine in a borrowed lustre and ornature; when (as harlots are wont) it began to paint, to be fond of gay attire, and devise things for deckings to itself most alien from its original state and constitution, (and which afterwards became the matter of bloody contentions, and cruelties,) when it grew ambitious of secular pomp, splendour, grandeur, and power, then was it so forsaken of God, and his Spirit, that within a very few years after Boniface the Third had obtained of the emperor Phocas the title of Universal Bishop, whereby popish tyranny and superstition became more fully *regnant* in the church, (that is, within less than twenty years,) began the senseless

delusion of Mahometanism to spring up without the church; and, assisted by the incredible accession of force and arms, came at length to prevail against it (now gradually sinking more and more into vice and ignorance) unto that degree, that in process of time, what Christianity had gained from paganism, it lost in a great measure unto Mahometanism;* so that in several parts of Christendom, where were reckoned thirty Christians for one pagan, there came to be thirty Mahometans for one Christian. And how next to unchristian the Christian world is, in the nearer countries, (very generally protestant as well as popish) is too well known: and in the remoter, divers writers inform us. *Ludolphus Æthiop. Hist.*, and divers others.

Let it now, therefore, be considered for how many sad centuries of years Christianity hath been at an amazing stand; got no ground upon the whole, but rather lost much. Is this the religion which so early, by its own native light and power, conquered so many nations, and which we expect to be the religion of the world? Who that understands this, would not with deepest concern and anxiety of spirit, inquire into the cause? And what cause can be so obvious to our inquiry, as a luxurious, and a contentious carnality; which both go together; and which have enfeebled, dispirited, and lost its self-diffusing life and strength? What we cannot remedy, let us at least see, and lament!

And let us supplicate more earnestly for the effusions of that Holy Spirit, which alone can give remedy to our distempers, and overcome the lusts of the flesh, of whatsoever kind, and restore Christian religion to itself, and make the Christian name great in the world. For can it content us that Christianity should appear, and be counted a mean, a weak, and even a ludicrous thing: that the Son of God should have descended, and come down into our world; have put on man; have died upon a cross; have ascended that he might fill all things, diffuse spirit, light and life through the world; have appointed prophets, apostles, pastors and teachers for the publishing his everlasting gospel; and at length leave men, even where the Christian name and profession doth obtain, no better men generally than he found them! distinguished only from the rest of the world, by certain peculiar notions, and by some different rites of worship; otherwise as flagitious, as sensual, as impious towards God, as full of wrath, hatred, malice, and mischievous design towards one another, as any pagans or infidels ever were! and yet that they should expect to be saved, only because they are called Christian! What a representation of Christian religion is this!

And thus it will be reckoned of, till it come to be understood more generally, and more openly avowed, that Christianity is not only a system of doctrines (and those reducible within a little compass) but of precepts also; not concerning the modes of worship only, but men's ordinary practice; and that not only respect their external actions, but which are designed to regulate and reform their minds and spirits, and do lay their first obligation there; must subdue their

* See in Brentwood's Inquiries.

inordinate appetites and passions, render them holy and harmless, the sons of God, shining as lights, holding forth the word of life, &c. (Phil. ii. 15, 16;)—the whole frame of the Christian institution being animated by the divine Spirit, into whose name we are baptized, (as well as into that of the Father and the Son) and which will be given where he is sought for, and not affronted.

Let this be taken for Christianity, and avowed to be so, and seriously endeavoured to be propagated as such, and it will not always be put to vie (but as upon equal terms) with Mahometanism, Judaism, paganism, mere deism, or whatsoever else shall exalt itself into a competition with it. And let whatsoever comes not within this compass, or is not truly and primitively Christian, be resected and cut off from it, and so it will appear an entire self-agreeable thing; and the Christian church be but one. While it is not so, it will be the business and design of the most, only to promote the interest of this or that party. And if their sense were put into plain words, this it would be, "I am for my church, or the church whereof I am, whatever becomes of the church of Christ." And so will a zealous endeavour for so narrow an interest as that of a divided party, engage and engross all the intention of their minds; and their religion be summed up in contention, and such only as hath its root in that division which (on the one side at least, and in great part too probably on both sides) chiefly proceeds from mere carnality. And what is it but religious contention, for the most part, that hath filled the Christian world with blood and ruins for many by-past ages? Carnal contention, under this most specious pretence, as being conversant about spiritual or religious concernments, is the thing animadverted on (though in gentler instances, as later occasions did require) in the following sermons. It was little imagined when they were delivered from the pulpit, they should ever have been made more public. I have in this publication of them partly yielded to the opinion of divers, who judged they might possibly be useful to more than those who heard them, and to them farther upon review: but have complied with a sort of necessity laid upon me, by being told if they were not published by me, the thing would be done (as it could) from broken, mistaken notes without me. My own memorials and preparations were indeed imperfect enough, as it cannot but be in the case of one, so often in the week engaged in such work. I have, as I could, by my own recollection, and by such help as I have otherwise had, endeavoured a full account of what was spoken, and am very confident nothing material is omitted. (Some ingeminations or varied expressions of the same thing, that are pardonable, if not useful to a hearer, but not so grateful, and less needful to a reader, I reckon not such.) But divers passages (though not distinct heads) that were intended, but through want of time omitted, I have inserted in the places to which they did belong; wherein none can think there is any wrong done. I am sensible the introductive part should have been, in some respects, otherwise methodized. But I am content to let it go as it is, though I find, by the notes that were brought me, that some things were somewhat transposed (otherwise

than was intended) in the delivery, from a memory not the most faithful.

If it do any good, it must be from the supply of the good Spirit of God, which I admonish all you that read seriously to seek, and ask from Him who hath promised thereupon it shall be given. The very expectation whereof will prevent reading with a vain mind, or ill design, and the consequent danger of receiving hurt by what you read.

Yours in our common Lord,

JOHN HOWE.

THE CARNALITY

OF

RELIGIOUS CONTENTION.

GAL. v. 16.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

THE last time I spake to you from these words, having largely opened before the import of *walking in the Spirit*, I undertook to show you how *the flesh* here is to be understood, against the lusts whereof such walking in the Spirit is the prescribed remedy. In the general you have been told, that flesh is here to be taken morally, and in that latitude, as to signify all sorts of moral evil, or the general depravedness of our corrupt nature: for though sometimes, in the moral acceptation, the sense is limited (as hath formerly been showed) to grosser sins, in contradistinction to more refined, as 2 Cor. vii. 1, and 1 John ii. 16, yet sometimes also it is so far extended, as to signify all sins, as Col. ii. 11, compared with Rom. vi. 6. And in this context it is plain the apostle comprehends sins of both these sorts under this one expression.

But what particular evils he more especially intended here to censure and caution these Galatian Christians against, under this one name, cannot better be understood than by consulting this context itself; in which, though we cannot say we have a full enumeration, we have yet very many instances of the carnalities against which this remedy is directed. Some of them more gross, (as we have told you they might be distinguished) adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, murder, drunkenness, revellings; and some other that may seem more refined, not as having less, but only a more subtle malignity in them; such as hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, &c. It may here be

thought strange, that such sins as these should be animadverted upon in Christian churches, (as this epistle is inscribed to such, the churches of Galatia, *ch.* i. 2,) so soon after the gospel was come among them; the apostle himself thought it strange; for you find him wondering at it, (*ch.* i. 6,) "I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, to another gospel:" yea, and after that, with the gospel, they had received the Spirit too. For it is said, (*ch.* iii. 2, 3,) "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? And are you so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, do you think to be made perfect by the flesh?"

We are, therefore, to consider what sort of persons and doctrines they were that corrupted and depraved those churches; and whereby it will be the more apprehensible by what kind of insinuations they so far prevailed: and we may collect, in very great part, what they were, from divers passages of this epistle itself; and, indeed, from this very context. Some would have us think the persons were of that sect called Gnostics, from their pretended and highly boasted knowledge. We have no evidence that this sect was so early known by this name; but it is very likely they were that sort of men that were afterwards so called. The characters here given them in this and the other apostolical epistles, do much agree with what divers of the more ancient Christian writers, and one pagan one, (Plotinus) says of that sect. Which pagan, an interpreter and great admirer of his (Marsil. Ficinus.) would fain have pass for a Christian, because living in a time when the controversy between Christianity and paganism was at the height, he says nothing against Christianity itself, but speaks very much against these pseudo-Christians, whom, though that author mentions not by that name, this his interpreter often doth it for him, inserting "The Gnostics," even when he is but translating, into the body of the work itself.

But this less concerns us. It is, however, out of question, that this sort of men, very anciently called Gnostics, did highly vaunt their great knowledge. A very tempting, specious pretence! Though their sublimer notions, (about the Æons, &c.) were imaginations only: fancy and not knowledge, or γνῶσις ψευδώνυμος, "knowledge misnamed," or falsely so called, (as we may borrow the apostle's expressions, 1 Tim. vi. 20, though those inventions were later), and could only serve to fill the minds of their proselytes with wind and vanity.

But their doctrines upon which the apostle animadverts in this epistle, we may collect from the manifest scope and design of it; and that was to assert *justification by faith without the works of the law*, which they greatly perverted; and *sanctification*

by the Spirit of Christ, or the doctrine of the *new creature*, which they even quite subverted. With which false doctrines they conjoined a most impurely vicious life and practice; falling in much with the Jews in their corrupt doctrines, and with the pagans in their licentious practice. Which must be equally tempting to carnal minds.

And this may make it appear less strange, that all these sorts of carnality that are here mentioned in this context, from *v.* 15 to the 21st, should, in reference to the same sort of men, be so put together. For it is evident they were partly a Judaizing, and partly a paganizing sort of Christians; as (for ends of their own) they affected to call themselves. They held it lawful for Christians to join with pagans in their solemnities of worship, which they were wont to celebrate in the temples of their idols. It is notorious how gross impurities and immoralities were in those days incorporated into the paganish worship; such as made it sufficiently reasonable that idolatry should have in conjunction with it, fornication and adultery, uncleanness and lasciviousness. And for the addition of witchcraft, it was not unaccountable; there being sorceries, magical rites, and diabolical incantations, observed to have been intermingled with the *sacra* of the pagans: and for which these (misnamed) Christians might have the greater kindness also, for the sake of Simon Magus, the father of their sect, by whom the affectation thereof was transmitted to some of his noted followers, that thought it a glorious thing to vie with their predecessor in this sort of excellency.

Nor is it alien from this purpose to take notice, that those diabolical rites are said to have obtained among the paganish idolaters, of drinking the warm blood of their sacrifices, and of eating things strangled with the blood in them, upon the imagination that in their so doing, they did partake of the very spirit of their gods whom they worshipped; and it is not altogether unsupposable that the devil might, in some unusual manner, enter into them at those times, more violently agitating their blood and other humours; in the higher ferments whereof, if by the directer influence of the great enemy of mankind, quarrels and murders (as was not unlikely) should also sometimes ensue, it could not but heighten the sport and triumphs of hell. And that the decree of the apostles and elders, (Acts xv.) might have such a reference, prohibiting these things conjunctly, idolatry and fornication, and things strangled, and blood; that they should by no means mingle with the pagans in these horrid rites; a learned modern writer of our own hath rendered very probable.* And hereto those vehement dehortations of the apostle must answerably be understood to refer, (1 Cor. x. 7—

* Dr. Spencer, de Ritibus Hebræorum.

11,) remonstrating to them, that they could not have fellowship with the Lord's table, and the table of devils. "And I would not," says he, "that you should have fellowship with devils." For though he did not judge it unlawful to eat of the *idolothyta, i. e.* things offered to idols, being sold in the shambles, he yet most earnestly protests against their presuming to mingle and partake in the horrid diabolical rites, and impure practices, that were wont to be used at their festivals in the idol's temples.

All thoughts of being by their Christianity obliged and enabled unto strict purity and holiness of heart and life, were out of doors with these seducers, and endeavoured to be extinguished in such as they could work to a compliance with them: whereof the apostle seems deeply apprehensive, when he so earnestly inculcates, that in Christ Jesus (or in the Christian state) neither circumcision nor uncircumcision were of any avail, but a new creature, and faith working by love.

But it must seem of all things the most unaccountable and incongruous, that men of so profligate sentiments and practices should be for introducing a justification by the works of the law, in opposition to that by the faith of Christ. It is manifest they hated the holy design of Christian religion, which they professed; and professed it, that they might have better opportunity to undermine it. Hereupon (not opening at once all the arcana of their way) they carry answerably to persons and occasions as they occurred; and as the apostle was all things to all, that he might save some, so were they, that they might pervert and destroy. To the Christian Jews one thing, to the Christian Gentiles another. In this their doctrine they did most plausibly Judaize, in their impure practices they verged more to paganism: pretending to Christian converts from among them, that Christ never intended to tie them to strict severities, or hold them under an uneasy bondage; whereto the apostle seems to refer, *ch.* v. 13. "Ye have been called (he grants) to liberty, but use not (saith he) your liberty for an occasion to the flesh." Thus we must suppose that they differently applied themselves to such as they designed to make their proselytes, endeavouring to accommodate themselves in one of these to one sort of men, and to another sort in the other. In dealing with the Jewish Christians they not only denied the doctrine of justification by faith, (opposing thereto that of justification by the works of the law) but calumniated it too, as if it tended to infer a liberty to sin, and make Christianity subservient to wickedness, whereof they knew their own to be more guilty. A piece of monstrous impudence, (but usual with men of such foreheads) to endeavour the averting that charge from themselves to which they were most manifestly liable, by first charging it on the innocent.

Hereto the apostle hath manifest reference, when, having first asserted against them justification by faith only, (Gal. ii. 16,) "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified:" he then vindicates the assertion against their imputation, that it made Christ a patron to men's sins; "If (saith he) while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore the minister of sin? God forbid. For, if I build again the things that I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor: for I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ, and am in and with him dead unto all sin, so as not to be under the dominion of any; and death never more had dominion over him, when he had once died." And, whereas, they thus objecting against the justification by faith in Christ, that it ministered unto sin, or made Christ a minister thereunto, were liable to have the objection retorted upon them, being a sort of men themselves so very infamously wicked; for this they had a double *salvo*, both of which the apostle doth industriously refute: that is, from the two parts of the law given by Moses, and the two sorts of the works of the law enjoined thereby, that is, the moral, and the ritual or ceremonial part. In reference to the former, they fall in with those Jewish conceits of the merit of their good works, done from the principle of free will; and that in order to their justification, this merit was to be measured by the preponderation of their good works to their bad,* and that it was possible that one good work in some cases might turn the scale: that is, if they were equal before. Now this the apostle occurs to, by showing that they that were under the law, were under a curse: for that if they continued not in all things written in the law to do them, all they did was nothing, as you may see, chap. iii. of this epistle, ver. 10.

And, then, as to the ritual or ceremonial part, because their sacrifices were in great part expiatory of sin, and divers of their other performances carried a great show of sanctity and piety in them; which their expiatory sacrifices could only be, as they were representative of the one propitiation, and their other observances were nothing to their sanctity, if the thing they were designed to signify, did not accompany the sign: they imagined they were not to signify its presence, but to supply its absence. This notion did obtain even with the stricter sort of them, the Pharisees themselves, who thereupon made very light of the weightier matters of the law, reckoning that though they were guilty of many immorali-

* See at large to this purpose, Smith's select discourses upon this subject.

ties in practice, their exact observance of the rites and ceremonies enjoined by Moses, would go far to make an amends; and that their paying tithe of mint, anise and cummin, would serve instead of judgment, faith, mercy, and the love of God, which they are said to pass over as very light and small matters. See Matt. xxiii. 23. compared with Luke xi. 42. And, herein, the apostle contests with these Galatian Christians, not only with vehemency, but with some kind of wonder, that, when gospel light had come among them, and that, having known God, or rather been known of him, as chap. iv. 9, they should attribute any thing to so beggarly rudiments as these were; that is, being circumcised, and keeping days, and months, and years, &c. the things whereon they laid so great stress. And, because they did so, he tells them in that 4th chapter, that he was afraid that he had bestowed labour in vain among them.

In sum, therefore, he makes it his business to evidence to them, that both their justification and their sanctification must be conjoined and arise together out of one and the same root, Christ himself; and by faith in him, (without the works of the law) as that which must vitally unite them with him; and that thereby they should become actually interested in all his fulness; that fulness of righteousness which was to be found only in him, and no where but in him; and withal, in that fulness of Spirit and life, and holy influence, which also was only in him; so as that the soul, being united by this faith with Christ, must presently die to sin and live to God, (*ch.* ii. 19, 20;) and at the same time, when he delivered a man from the law as dead to it, he became to him a continual, living spring of all the duty which God did by his holy rule require and call for, and render the whole life of such a man—a life of devotedness to God.

And it is here, by the way, worth the while to observe how the apostle himself expounds that phrase of being dead to the law, by being delivered from it. Rom. vii. 1—6. And no man can be said to be delivered from any thing, as it is a good, or an advantage to him, but as it is an evil, and doth him hurt. And the law hurts no man as a rule of life. But as to one stated under the full power of it, it is a bar against that great blessing of the Spirit, (*ch.* iii. 13, 14;) which by its yet abiding curse, it keeps off from him, hereby occasioning his continuance in sin, and then condemning him for it. Whereupon, how clear is the current of the discourse in these words *viz.* "By the law I am dead to the law, that I might live to God; I am crucified with Christ, yet I live." *q. d.* The law itself hath slain me, and killed all my hopes and expectations from it: the same law that slew Christ, hath slain me. I am crucified with him; which supposes his being in him by that faith, by which he was to live ever after. In this faith, stood his marriage to Christ, who succeeds

into the room of the law, as the case is stated, Rom. vii. 1—3, &c. They that were settled, in reference to each other, in the conjugal state, as the law and the sinner were; upon the death of the one (which soever it be) the relation ceases, and so the obligation which depended upon that relation. And, thereupon, says he, the law itself having given me my death wound, and killed me as to it, in the article of dying, I join myself to Christ; and yield to be crucified with him, but therein acquire with him a new life. Nevertheless I live: and how? Not I, but Christ, liveth in me; and the life that I live in the flesh, is by faith in the Son of God, who hath loved me, and given himself for me. And this life, I now thus live, is a life of pure and absolute devotedness to God; terminated upon his interest and glory as the *end* of it, governed by his declared will, as the *rule* of it; *i.e.* in sum, it is a holy life, or (as before) it is a living to God. Whereupon he so copiously distinguishes, (*ch.* iii.) between Jews and Jews, those that were born after the flesh, and those born of the Spirit; the sons of the bond-woman, and of the free, (as he allegorically speaks,) signifying the latter only born into this new state of life. By all which he shows the connection to be most necessary and inviolable, between being justified by faith in Christ, and a life of holiness; so little opposite were these to one another, that one and the same faith was to infer both.

But now, that the large extent of this holiness of life might more fully appear, the apostle signifies that it must not only exclude those grosser lusts and works of the flesh, but also such as, because they might seem somewhat more refined, might be reckoned by some, less criminal; he therefore inserts divers of this other kind also: and the state of the case did equally require it. For it appears, (as it might well be supposed) that so far as any were tainted with the false notions, and with inclinations to the impure practices before mentioned, they were filled with animosities, with wrath, envyings, and hatred towards them that had not received the taint; and they might have too much place with these back again towards them. Whereupon there could not but be very great and high ferments in these churches. Nothing, therefore, could be more requisite or seasonable, than that several instances of this sort of carnality should be put into this catalogue, *viz.* hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, &c. For they were not to be thought (as was said) more refined, as having less, but a more subtle energy, or penetrative power of malignity in them. Nor, indeed, hath Christianity, and the Christian church, suffered more by any sort of evils than by those of this sort. Others destroy particular persons; these, besides their doing so, do more directly hurt the community, and tend to waste and destroy the church.

Now as to those grosser carnalities mentioned in this context, I did formerly say somewhat briefly, and so I did as to that which seems the central one among those of this latter sort, *viz.* that of heresy; which I considered according to what it doth import in itself, and did design also to consider it in this its concomitancy, *viz.* of the things here mentioned in so near conjunction, and that are of nearer affinity with it, hatred, envyings, and the like. I have, indeed, been since in some suspense whether I should pursue that intention or no; but upon serious consideration, and solemn looking up to Heaven for direction, I have determined not to let this sort of carnality pass without just animadversion. For I consider that I speak to a Christian assembly, who must be understood all to profess equal and impartial reverence to the word of God, as to a revelation come down from heaven, for our direction and conduct thither. And, therefore, none dare, upon serious thoughts, allow in themselves any kind of regret or disgust, as to so material and important a part of this holy word. We are assured the words of God will do good to them that walk uprightly, that is, to upright-hearted ones; who it must, therefore, be supposed will walk or deal uprightly in their attendance thereunto. And I cannot but hope that God will graciously help us to speak, and hear, with that uprightness and integrity of heart, that this word of his may do good to some, without doing hurt to any.

In speaking, therefore, to this sort of carnality, (for we must mention it by such a term as the Holy Ghost hath thought fit to be put upon it) I shall, *First*, note to you some previous things more generally; and then shall, *Secondly*, let you see what appearances there may be of it in such a case as the apostle's present discourse hath reference unto.

First. It will be of use to us, more generally, to note these few things:—

1. That the several expressions of it which we find in this context in closer connection with heresy, as it were guarding it before and behind, *viz.* hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings, do all note but one radical evil, and do all agree in one root. Whereupon it will be the less needful to insist upon them severally, or to give you the criticism of each word by itself; which it were a great deal more easy to do, than it will be useful, or of any avail to us. What I shall say, therefore, will be more general; but will, however, give you the occasion of casting your eye upon the particulars, whereby you will have the more distinct account of that carnality which is here referred to by the apostle.

2. This is needful to be noted, too, that this precept of the apostle, considered as a prescription against fulfilling the lusts

of the flesh, has more immediate and direct reference to this sort of carnality. This is plain, if you will but again peruse the words as they lie in their closest connection. For when he had said in the 14th verse, " That all the law is fulfilled in this one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," (most of all, no doubt, one's Christian neighbour,) he adds, " But if you bite and devour one another, take heed ye be not devoured one of another." Then immediately come in the words of the text, " This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;" *q.d.* the lust of the flesh will be working this way, putting you upon biting and devouring one another. According as sentiments begin to differ, and minds are divided, inclinations will carry one this way, and another that; and then you will be too prone to be at biting, and be ready to fall to devouring one another. Now I have no better remedy to prescribe you against both than this, " Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." I should have been a very unfaithful interpreter of this context to you, if I had not taken notice of this so immediate connection.

3. This is further to be noted, that this sort of carnality that lies in strifes, in emulations, in envyings, in hatred, &c. may come to have its occasion of being exercised, of working, lusting, and exerting itself, about the doctrines of the gospel; than which nothing is more evident, in that you find that these things are put in connection with heresies, which must be understood to be a corruption of gospel doctrine. Very true, indeed, it is, that the word heresy, among the more ancient philosophers, was used in a more gentle, and no way infamous sense, signifying only this or that sect of philosophers. But the word coming to be borrowed and transferred by sacred writers into the holy Scriptures, there it is mostly taken in a very ill sense, (though not always) as signifying error or corruption in doctrine of a very high and destructive nature, as Tit. iii. 10, 11; 2 Pet. ii. 1. For though all heresy be error, or carries error in it; yet all error is not heresy; that must be such error as strikes at the root, and is conjunct with heart disaffection and malignity, (as was noted the last time) standing in opposition to faith, which is not a merely mental thing, but lies very principally in the heart. Doctrinal matters are, however, here referred unto, even in the very notion of heresy, and therefore about those matters these carnalities may have place. For when the several passions here mentioned are raised, and do tumultuate in the breasts of this and that particular person, they soon and easily spread and propagate themselves to others, so as to infect the community. And then it comes to the forming of it into parties, or dividing it into two sides, as the word *διχοστασίαι* (which we translate " seditions,") signifies; the one stated and posited as in an hostile

posture against the other, till at length the matter arrive to that height and pitch of contumacious and fixed obstinacy, as, in matters so important as the apostle's discourse reflects upon, will complete the notion of heresies, *viz.* on one side at least; not, perhaps, without great faultiness on the other, which comes next to be noted.

4. As such carnality may have place and exercise about gospel doctrine, so it is very possible it may show itself on both sides, even on their part who have the *truth* with them, as well as on theirs who oppose it, and make it their business to propagate the contrary error or false doctrine. The very defence of truth itself may be accompanied with such carnalities, such strife, wrath, malice, envy, as divides the guilt between the divided parties, and leaves neither side innocent.

I am, you know, by mere providence, in the series and tract of a discourse long continued upon this context, led to say what I now do; and I have, therefore, the more hope, that through the blessing of God it may be of some use to us. But this comes most directly under our notice; and let it be noted, that, whereas in such contests both sides are wont to be confident they are in the right, neither the one nor the other may be over confident or careless of not being in the wrong, in what may be of equal or greater importance than the matters themselves, disputed among them that agree in the substantials of religion, or that hold the head, can be. Let us, I say, deeply consider it, that such sinful carnality may have place and exercise not only about religious concernments, but even on that side where the truth lies; which is from hence evident, that the apostle immediately before the text, as I have noted, says, "If you bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not bitten and consumed one of another." A great aptitude he therefore observed there was, to be biting on both sides, even where the truth lay, and where it lay not.

For we are here further to observe, that whereas our apostle sadly considered that many among these Christians of Galatia were lapsed and fallen from the purity and sincerity of religion; he apprehended, too, that they who were not so fallen, took not the best course for the recovery of them that were. Which that admonition of his must mean, (*ch.* vi. 1, 2,) "Brethren, if a man be overtaken with a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." It seems he reckoned that the sounder part among them, and that ought (and, it is like, thought themselves) to be more spiritual, while they showed not more of a spirit of meekness towards the lapsed, were not so spiritual as they should be, and discovered more carnality than became them, more wrath

and bitterness of spirit than could comport with the law of Christ. They will be little awed by this, and be apt for all this to indulge their own furious passions, that think he hath no law. But though one were never so sure he hath the truth on his side, it is in itself a dreadful thing, to whomsoever shall allow himself the liberty seriously to think of it. For what must we conceive of such truth, that is to be defended in some cases, I say, that in some cases ought to be so? We must surely conceive of it as a divine, a sacred thing, a heaven-born thing, a thing of heavenly descent, part of a revelation immediately come forth from the very bosom of God; so is the whole gospel revelation to be looked upon. Now here is carnality that lusts; such a kind of carnality as the context speaks of, wrath, strife, hatred, &c. Here is such carnality, lusting, actually lusting, seeking prey, ravening for food. And what doth it feed upon? No meaner thing than divine truth! evangelical doctrines! Monstrous thought! Consider, I beseech you, my friends, what this comes to; the feeding an impure lust upon sacred things, or upon that which is divine! I must have my lust satisfied, says the proud, contentious spirit. Wrath burns, anger boils; sacred things are not spared, but fallen upon, as the prepared food of lust. It will be fed—they are not forborne. All reverence of God is forgotten, heaven is ravaged, the most sacred mysteries of God's own kingdom are violated, and torn this way and that (O horrid thing!) by harpies, vultures, by most fierce and furious lusts. And if a man would know, recognize, take knowledge of the most deeply inward sensations and intention of his own heart, thus it is, I must now apply my thoughts, bend my mind, to consider a revelation come from heaven; and for what? For the end for which it was given, to enlighten, purify, quicken my soul towards God, renew and form it for God, to serve and enjoy him? No; but on purpose to feed, to gratify a lust! We can (too often) make neither better nor worse of it, but just so it is.

These things being premised, I would now go on a little more particularly to show you,—

Secondly. Wherein carnality may appear exerting itself, even about such things; or what will be manifest indications of such a carnality as is here referred unto, acting about, or in reference to the things of God, the most sacred and important truths and doctrines of his gospel.

1. When in comparison of some less things, wherein we find occasion or pretence to differ, little account is made of the incomparably greater things, wherein all serious Christians are agreed. and wherein they really cannot but be agreed. Let it but be considered whether pains be not taken to devise some matter or other to contend about; (that shows a great disposition;) and

then having found out some minuter things about which to differ, our differences, as little as they are, quite swallow up our agreements. The whole gospel signifies nothing, (though full of the most glorious wonders) in comparison of some punctilios, either that we have invented, or that it may be doubted whether there be any thing in them or nothing. Here is some mystery in all this! A lust is to be gratified—an appetite to contend. This winds and wriggles this way and that, loath to appear but under some specious disguise of zeal for truth, indignation against false doctrine, or the like; but it betrays itself, and unawares, shows its ugly, serpentine head. For if the thing chosen out to be the matter of contest be thought worth so much, when it is manifestly either in comparison little, or nothing but a figment, why are not the things on all hands most confessedly great and most evident, more highly esteemed, loved, relished, and with gust and delight fed upon? Why do not the greater things signify more to unite us in love and communion with all that agree with us in them, than the lesser things to divide us, about which we disagree? Indeed, the disagreements were in themselves vastly great between the untainted Christians of these Galatian churches, and that horrid sect that the apostle's discourse has manifest reference unto. Blessed be God there are not such disagreements amongst us. But while there is less taint of error in our minds, (as to these things) are we not concerned to take heed there be not as great a taint of this vicious carnality in our hearts? It speaks too much of it, when, having devised a difference, we are prone to overlook and make little account of the great things wherein we are entirely and most professedly agreed.

If we consider the things which the doctrinal part of this epistle doth more expressly refer to, as I have noted already, how great things in reference hereto are we fully agreed in! We are all agreed that a sinner, an apostate lapsed creature, can never be saved and brought to a blessed state, but he must be justified, and he must be sanctified. He must be justified, to make his state safe; he must be sanctified, to make the temper of his spirit good, capable of communion with God in this world, and of final eternal blessedness with him in the other. We are agreed, that such justification and such sanctification are both the effects of most absolutely free and sovereign grace; that none could be ever justified, but by freest grace; that none can ever be sanctified but by freest grace, most absolutely and most sovereignly free. We are agreed, that the highest perfection of sanctification that can ever possibly be attained unto, signifies nothing at all to deserve, to procure by merit, our justification. We are agreed, that both, as they are from the most free and sovereign grace, so they do come through the mediation

of Jesus Christ, the alone Mediator between God and man: that the righteousness is entirely and only Christ's, by which we are justified: that the Spirit is most entirely and only Christ's, by which we are sanctified; according to that in 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. Such as are mentioned there were before the grossest and vilest of sinners, fornicators, adulterers, idolaters, &c. "And such (saith the apostle) were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." You cannot but be in all these agreed.

We are agreed, that whoever does sincerely, evangelically believe in God through Christ, receive Christ, is united with him, or is in him; who doth by serious repentance turn to God; whose heart is won to love him in truth as his highest and best good; who is conformed to the image of his Son; and who, having been made willing in the day of his power, doth now render a sincere obedience to him; every such one is in a safe state, accepted with God, has found grace in his eyes. For no words of Scripture can be plainer, than that they that believe on Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life, (John iii. 16;) yea, that they have it, (*v.* 36,) that life is begun with them which is never to end, or which is in the sure way to be continued till it become everlasting; that they that repent, and turn from all their transgressions, their iniquities shall not be their ruin, (Ezek. xviii. 30;) that God hath prepared the things which eye hath not seen—for them that love him, and will give them the crown of life according to his own promise, (1 Cor. ii. 9; James i. 12;) that Christ doth become the Author of eternal salvation to them that obey him, (Heb. v. 9;) that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, (Rom. viii. 1;) that it must turn wholly to the praise of the glory of his grace, that God makes them accepted in the Beloved. Eph. i. 6. We do all agree, that they that do never believe, they that never repent, they that never love God, they that are never brought to obey him, that live in enmity and rebellion against him to the last breath, must needs be in a lost state, are never justified, never accepted with God; are liable unto coming and abiding wrath, and remain under condemnation. John iii. 16, 36; Luke xiii. 3; Col. iii. 6. We agree that such faith, such repentance, such love to God, such obedience, even in the most entire sincerity, are not to be considered at all as any cause of such a person's acceptance with God; they do characterize the accepted person, but they cause it not, they deserve nothing; nay, they could not if they were perfect. No internal work of the Holy Ghost, though in this our present state it were most absolutely perfect, so as to exclude every thing of sin, could be any part of that

righteousness that must justify us before God. To suppose that it could, would be manifestly to confound the offices of the Redeemer, and of the Holy Ghost. It was Christ that was to merit for us; the Holy Ghost was never to merit for us. It was not the Holy Ghost that died for us; nor can his operations or productions in us have any causative influence to the meriting the justified and accepted state of any person before God. They were never meant for that purpose, nor have any aptitude or accommodateness thereunto. They cannot make us never to have sinned; nor can atone for our having done so. We cannot but be agreed in this, for it is plain, and carries its own evidence in itself: *i. e.* suppose we a person, as soon as he is converted, made perfectly free from sin, that very moment, by some extraordinary powerful work of the Holy Ghost on his soul, how shall that expiate for his having been a sinner?

Now where there are so great things wherein we agree, and we make little of them,—things that should raise up our souls, and awaken all our powers unto the highest acts of love, gratitude and praise to God, and our Redeemer, and fill us with wonder and pleasure as oft as we think of them; an indisposition of mind to take notice of, and consider such things, so as to improve and use them to the great purposes of the Christian life, as incentives to the love of God, an entire devoting of ourselves to him, vigorous and diligent serving of him, and walking holily and comfortably with him in our daily course,—through a greater disposition to contend about we well know not what besides,—too plainly shows much of that carnal disaffection which the apostle doth here animadvert upon. There are other things belonging to this same purpose that I find I cannot reach to at this time.

SERMON II.

Gal. v. 16.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

I have begun to show you by what indications much carnality may appear, and show itself in and about spiritual matters; as, (for instance) in the controverting, yea, even in the defending the truths of the gospel: and intend now to proceed. You have heard it does so,—

1. When Christians, who are very far agreed in the most im-

portant things, make little of the things wherein they are agreed, though never so great, in comparison of the much less things wherein they differ: as all serious Christians must be understood to agree in far greater things than it is possible for them to differ in. I lately mentioned to you sundry great agreements that I cannot doubt to be very common with serious and intelligent Christians, which I shall not now stay to repeat, but add,—

2. Such carnality shows itself, when there is too much aptness to lay greater stress than is needful upon some unscriptural words in delivering Scripture doctrine. Here we may take carnality as the apostle doth, 1 Cor. iii. 3. "While there are divisions among you, are you not carnal, and walk (or act) as men?" There is more of the man in it than of the Christian, when we can make a shift to divide about a word, and that (in the present use of it) devised only by man; when words that are merely of human stamp, and used in no such sense, or to no such purpose in Scripture, however they may be significant, yet too great a stress and weight is laid upon them, either by too stiffly adhering to them on the one hand, or too vehemently decrying them on the other hand; while (perhaps, and it is a certain and a known case) the meaning may be the same on both sides, and would be so, or would appear to be so, if such and such words were waived, and others more understood were chosen, and used in the room of them. It is true, we are not to think (and no man of sense can) that we are obliged never to use other words in such matters but such as the translators of the Bible have hit on in their version of it, as if that must consecrate those words, and leave all other under a profane character. But if it appear that any word of a doubtful signification is misunderstood by many, creates offence, and through some fixed, immoveable prejudice, or prepossession that some other notion of it hath obtained in the minds of many, it will always be otherwise understood by them than we intend, let it rather go for a *nehushtan*, than that the peace of the church should be broken, and men's minds be disturbed and disquieted by it. This is the case, when any such words that might be arbitrarily used or laid aside are made so necessary, or so destructive, as if all religion were saved or lost by them: when one so cries up such a word, as if he would say, "The heavens must fall if I have not my word;" and another decries it as much, as if he said, "They must fall if it be admitted, or if I have not mine." Sure there must be in this case that forbidden λογομαχία, of which the apostle speaks in that 1 Tim. vi. 4, which they are usually most apt to be guilty of that are also guilty of what is put in conjunction therewith, "perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds;" with these, falls in this "strife of words:" whether that be to be understood objectively, or instrumentally, strife

about words, or wordy strifes, I shall not here determine. But that whole context is worth our considering. *v.* 3—5. "If any man teach otherwise," do ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖ, teach other, or *alien* things, or after another or *alien* manner, "and consent not to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strife of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself." And therewith agrees what we find also mentioned, with the charge of avoiding them, (2 Tim. ii. 23,) "foolish and unlearned questions that gender strifes." Some may fancy they make themselves considerable for learning by such altercations; but the apostle slurs that conceit, calling them unlearned. So I remember Seneca (*de Brev. Vit.*) says of the Greeks, (calling it their disease) that they made such ado with certain idle questions, (as, how many rowers belonged to the vessel that carried Ulysses? and such like, that he there mentions) whereby, says he, they did not appear more learned, but only more troublesome.

3. When we consider with too little indulgence one another's mistakes and misapplications in the use even of Scripture words, placing them, as some may do, upon things to which they do not properly belong, when yet they agree about the things themselves. There are words in the Scripture revelation, that it may be the one or the other of disagreeing persons may apply to one thing, when the other (perhaps truly) thinks they belong more properly to another. There is an inconvenience in this: the case is much as if one should have an idea of all the streets of London in his mind as they lie, but he mistakes the names, and transposes them; as for instance, calls Cheapside Cornhill, or Cornhill Cheapside. He does not speak so intelligibly to another, but at the same time may have the same idea in his mind of London that another has. And this, however, when it occurs in religious disceptations, ought to be considered (though there be an inconvenience in it) with indulgence, as knowing we are all liable to mistakes in greater matters. And as it is possible there may be somewhat of carnality, some perverseness, some cloud arising from infirm flesh that darkens the mind, and occasions it so to mistake; so it is much greater, not to be able to bear in another such a mistake.

4. When there is an agreement about the main and principal things that the Scripture revelation contains and carries in it; but there is not that agreement about their mutual respects and references unto one another. This is a matter, indeed, of greater importance; there can be no true scheme given of gos-

pel truths and doctrines, if such their references and respects to one another be not rightly understood. But an entire true scheme of Christian doctrines will not enter into all minds; and, for the most part, they are particular passages, or particular truths, that strike hearts, and that God makes use of to do souls good by. And if so entire a scheme will not enter into the minds of many, whether through their darkness or ignorance, or whether through any thing of prejudice that was as it were forelaid in their minds: nothing remains but to be patient of it, and to do them what good we can, even upon their own terms, and in the way wherein they are capable of it. There was such an obstruction in minds among these Corinthians, even upon this very account of their carnality, as we see, in that 3rd of the 1st epistle, that the apostle tells them, "I could not speak to you as spiritual, (it must be understood comparatively) but as unto carnal;" and, therefore, as a wise instructor, thought it needful to keep back, to withhold some things from them that he reckoned might be meat to them, solid meat, strong meat, because they had been hitherto unable to bear it, nor were yet able. It is in that case needful rather somewhat to ἐπέχειν, to withhold some things, or suspend, than by a continued and too urgent inculcation to frustrate one's own design: and while we would have all enter into less capable minds, to have nothing enter. It may sometimes be, that when too much is endeavoured at once to be borne in upon them against an invincible obstruction, we only engage them to fortify the more strongly, and shut out all; and so we defeat ourselves. They gain nothing, and our whole design is frustrated and lost. In all our applications to the souls of men, there must be patient waiting, and very gradual endeavours used, without force and furious striving; yea, in our having to do with such as are yet the very vassals and captives of the devil. So the apostle speaks, (2 Tim. ii. 24,) "The servant of the Lord should not strive, but be patient towards (even all) men, and wait (even in reference to them that are hitherto altogether impenitent) when God will give them repentance, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, that are led captive by him at his will." Much more are such methods to be used "towards them who call on the name of our Lord out of a pure heart," as he speaks a little above in the same context, *v.* 22. And consider the extent and endearingness of this character. It is to be deplored that it extends not further; but so far as it doth extend, God forbid it should not have a most persuasive efficacy and power upon our spirits, to make us follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, even with all them that bear that character, *i. e.* "that call on the Lord with a pure heart:"

their Lord (as it is elsewhere) as well as ours; be they of what party, or denomination, soever.

5. Much of this carnality appears about such matters, when we are over-intent to mould and square gospel truths and doctrines by human measures and models, and too earnestly strive to make them correspond; that is, when we aim, beyond what things can admit, to stretch (or rather to shrink and contract) God's transactions with men, unto the scheme and model of our own abstract notions and definitions; or of merely human, civil, or political economies, administrations, and transactions; such I mean as obtain among men towards one another; and so labour to have the same measures take place throughout in reference to divine things, as do in human; whereby more than is needful, useful, or, indeed, so much as possible to agree and quadrate, of logic, metaphysics, and of civil and other law, is introduced into theology. Illustrations, indeed, may be taken thence, but not strict measures. It is impossible sometimes they should be so. Divers things are taken among men in such notions, as, in delivering the doctrine of the gospel cannot have a full and adequate place: they often will not exactly agree or correspond. As if in speaking of God's pardoning and justifying a sinner, we should take our measures of pardon and justification strictly from what obtains amongst men, we shall find a great difference and disagreement. For plain it is, that, according to human measures, the same person cannot be both pardoned and justified. He that is pardoned cannot be justified, and he that is justified cannot be pardoned. But according to divine and gospel measures both are truly said of the same person. In the one case there is an inconsistency, in the other a fair agreement of the same things. He that is at a human bar a justified person, needs no pardon, his case admits of none: if he were justified, pardon were absurdly talked of: and so if he were pardoned, that does plainly imply that he was not justified. It is quite otherwise if you bring these things to the gospel, and God's dealing with sinners. I cannot now spend time in showing you distinctly how these things do lie, and are very capable of being accommodated, in the sinner's case; some resemblance will appear, not an exact or entire correspondency. The instance, however, serves our present purpose, to show that God's procedure and methods in his dispensations towards men, will not in all things square with human measures.

Again, If we speak of the doctrine of God's covenant in Jesus Christ, we cannot take our measures from human covenants that pass between man and man, especially one private man and another: for there the persons are under no obligation before their mutual consent. It is not so between God and man; God's

covenants are laws as well as covenants; and so a man is, before he consents, obliged to consent. Therefore, here again it appears gospel doctrines are not to be exactly measured by human models: nor should this be too earnestly endeavoured; we should not too much set our minds upon it; it is to offer at a thing in its own nature not practicable, and there is too much of man in it.

6. When there is a discernible proneness to oppose the great things of the gospel to one another, and to exalt or magnify one above or against another. It is too plain this may more commonly come under observation, than it doth under that reprehension which it deserves. For instance, those two great things that I mentioned at first, justification and sanctification, both very great things, of most apparent and confessed necessity to the salvation and blessedness of the souls of men; justification, that a man's state may be good; sanctification, that the temper of his soul may become so. But is it not too common to magnify one of these above or against the other; to contend and dispute with great fervour concerning the higher value and excellency, the dignity or precedency of this or that, and to which the preference belongs; to be so much taken up about the one, as seldom to think of the other; and it may be not well to savour and relish the mention of it? Some are so taken up about the business of justification, (that admirable vouchsafement of grace to sinners!) that they care not to hear of sanctification; and so all their religion is foreign to them, or lies in somewhat without them, or in a mere relative thing, that alters not their spirits. A strange religion! that makes a man never the better man: or notwithstanding which he is, in the habitual frame of his soul, as bad as ever, vain, terrene, worldly-minded, proud, passionate, wrathful, malicious, vindictive, false, deceitful, perhaps (for that is not worse than the rest) very impurely sensual. But, no man can tell why, nor to be sure he himself, he takes himself to be a justified person: and perhaps his imagination of it raises in him a sort of rapturous, unaccountable joy, without ground or root, and which will not only wither, but turn (without a seasonable and merciful change) into endless horror, weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth! A fearful and most surprising issue and disappointment of a high and unmisgiving confidence, and expectation to be saved! With others, whose temper, circumstances, or temptations, have less inclined them to rejoicing, their religion is made up of tormenting anxieties and fears, and consists in the daily revolving of perpetual, endless doubts, whether they are justified or no; without any direct, formed design of being or doing good; by which they might, in due time, come to have more truly comfortable apprehensions of the goodness of their

state. They more care to be pardoned for being bad, than to become good!

Again, on the other hand, there may be some so wholly taken up about what they are in themselves to be and do, and in the earnest, but too abstract, or less evangelical (and, therefore, less fruitful) endeavour after higher pitches of sanctity, without due reference to the grace, Spirit, and blood of a Redeemer, that they neglect, and look not after their justification and acceptance with God in him; nor do relish and savour as they ought, the doctrine of the gospel herein: do more incline to a philosophical (and scarcely Christian) Christianity; forgetting Christ to be their Redeemer, their Lord, and vital Head, and that they are (or ought to be) under his conduct, and through his mediation, daily tending to God and blessedness.

But now, upon the whole, when there appears an aptness or disposition to separate these two, justification and sanctification from one another, or either of them from abiding in Christ, or to oppose them to one another, or contend about the priority of the one or the other, (when no doubt they go together) and about the preference or excellency of the one above the other, which is the more considerable thing; herein appears much carnality of mind, an unsound, injudicious distempered spirit. And it is a like case, as if a malefactor at the same time is under sentence by which he is condemned to die, and under a most dangerous disease, that appears very probably mortal to him: he is a compassionate prince, willing to save his life, and he at once vouchsafes him his pardon, and provides a very skilful and able physician for the curing of his disease: the wretched creature, hearing of this, falls a disputing which of these is the greatest favour, to have my disease cured, or, to have my crime pardoned; and in the heat of the dispute he neglects both, looks after neither. This is indeed less supposable in the instanced case; but how great a distemper doth it show, that it should be so in this, which is of unexpressibly greater importance!

And now, further, it is agreed on all hands, that faith in a Redeemer is necessary to salvation, with those that are adult, and capable of attending to the gospel revelation; but here, what disputes are there raised! with what fervour are they managed, concerning the place of it, or the kind of that necessity which this faith is of, in order to the safe state of a sinner! A like case again, as if such a condemned malefactor is told of his prince's professed, gracious intendments towards him, but he doubts the sincerity of his professions. He gives him all desirable assurances, and tells him, Do but trust me, and all shall be well. But he presently falls a disputing, "yea, but how am I to consider this trust? (we suppose it only such a trust as may

be fitly enough placed upon a man) which way is it to contribute towards my safety or welfare? Is it to be an instrument or a condition?" How absurd an abuse were this of the clemency of a propitious prince! If there were a public proclamation of pardon to many offenders at once concerned together, and they all agree only to disagree, to vie with one another their skill in criticizing upon the words, or in disputing the method, contending about the order and coherence of parts; and make it their business not thankfully to accept, but cavil at, to tear, and mangle, and pluck in pieces the proclamation, and defeat the kind design and gracious tender of their prince; what clemency would not this provoke to the highest resentment and indignation! And what now can be stranger, or more perverse, than that a revelation from heaven of so much goodwill to men, in the substance so plain, and that so directly concerns the salvation of souls, should be so torn and mangled, considered for no purpose less than that for which it was vouchsafed; and that the very end itself should be in so great part eluded, that was so kindly designed in it? Though yet the endeavour of salving difficulties that occur, by earnest prayer, diligent study, and by amicable and placid collation among brethren, or comparing of sentiments, sincerely designed for a clearer understanding the frame of the gospel truth, or how it may be with most advantage represented to men for the promoting of the common salvation, can be liable to no just reprehension; being managed with that reverence that so sacred things challenge, and with a due sense of our own ignorance and imperfection. That only which is blameable in this case, and whereof I reckon no account can be given, or defence made, is that when, for the substance, the gospel propounds and lays before us so plain a way wherein men are to endeavour the saving of their souls, as wherein the wayfaring man, though a fool, needs not err, *i. e.* there must be repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, a renewed heart, a holy life;—one comes and pretends to show that order of these things one way, so as to compose a scheme of them that is represented as most necessary to be observed and held to:—No, saith another, I will give you a righter scheme of salvation, another way, and mightily presses the necessity of that, and the dangerous mistakes of the other. And thus they cover a plain way with thorns and briars; do not instruct, but perplex and distract, whom they should direct; create distinctions and oppositions of scheme to scheme, not only without necessity, but almost without a difference; and yet insist with vehemency, and lay men's salvation upon their understanding the matter so or so, when it is hoped thousands have been saved, that never heard of the one scheme or the other, as they are

distinguished and opposed to each other. Who can justify this? Again, in the—

7th place: When any do with great zeal contend for this or that opinion or notion, as very sacred and highly spiritual, (as they account) with no other design, than that under that pretence they may indulge their own carnal inclination with the greater liberty. It was the very genius of this sort of men against whom this epistle was meant, whether they were then called Gnostics it matters not. The name well agreed to them, and they were known by it afterwards. They were men of much pretence to knowledge and sublime notions, as they counted them. And herein lay their religion; and under this pretence they indulged themselves in all manner of licentiousness. When any do take up with mere notions, which they are zealous for, accounting them very highly spiritual; and under pretext of these, they indulge the carnality of their hearts, if not of their lives and practices too; and their fine notion, (as they account it) which they (more uncertainly) father upon the Spirit of truth, must be substituted in the room of all that love, meekness, humility, heavenliness, self-denial, which are the most certain and undoubted fruits of this blessed Spirit: when under the pretence of being notional men, and of knowing a great deal more than most others do, any neglect their own spirits, and suffer pride, avarice, ambition, vindictiveness and falsehood, to shelter themselves under the thin cobweb of a few fine-spun notions; and they can now hereupon live at random, with more ease to their own minds, and they think, with better reputation as to other men: here is a glittering show only of an airy, imagined, pretended spirituality, drawn over (but which doth not hide) corrupt, rotten, putrid flesh. Have you never known such a case, when it might be said, There goes a proud, ambitious man, a covetous man, a false man, a malicious man; but he is a man of rare and singular notions, knows a great deal more than most others do; and this must atone for all his crimes with God and man, and both quiet his conscience, and salve his credit together! And who can doubt but this man must be very fond of his own opinions, and zealously contend and dispute for them upon any occasion, (though he never so ineptly make it) when they are to do him so great service, and to stand him in so much stead, *i. e.* to supply the room for him of all real religion and morality! And if he have happened upon such notions as are really true, and revealed by God himself, by how much the more certainly divine they be, so much the greater is the wickedness so basely to prostitute sacred things, truths that are the very offspring of heaven, unto so vile purposes. It were fault enough to make them serve different or other purposes than

they are capable of, *i. e.* to supply the room of religion and real goodness. What an indignity is that to religion, to suppose an empty, spiritless opinion can fill up its place; a thing that does a man no good, for which his mind and spirit is nothing the better; much more, that shelters what is so very bad! Can this serve for religion? That religion that consists with being proud, with being deceitful, with being malicious, with being revengeful? Learn to despise such a religion! Much more, that is taken up to veil over these, and exclude all real goodness! Again,—

8. When, in the maintaining any doctrine of the gospel in opposition to others, we industriously set ourselves to pervert their meaning, and impute things to them that they never say. Or, again, if we charge their opinions whom we oppose with consequences which they disclaim; professing, it may be, rather to disclaim their former opinion, and change their judgment, than admit such consequences, if they could discern any connection between the one and the other:—this surely argues a mighty disposition to contend, when we will quarrel with one that is really of our own mind; for herein he appears to be virtually already in the same mind in a greater matter, at least, than he differs with us about; because no man charges another's opinion with a consequence, designing thereby to oblige him to change his opinion; but as supposing it to be an agreed thing between them both, that the consequence is worse than the opinion. When, therefore, the consequence I charge is disclaimed by him whom I oppose, either it is justly charged, or it is not. If it be not, his opinion may be true, notwithstanding what I herein say to the contrary, and I am certainly so far in an error. But if it be justly charged, being yet disclaimed, we are formally agreed concerning the consequence; and are virtually agreed concerning the disputed point too, because he professedly disavows it upon supposition such a consequence would follow, which yet perhaps he sees not; and so the agreement must be much greater than the difference. And yet commonly this signifies nothing in order to peace: that is, it is not enough that I see the same things that you do, unless I also see them too with your eyes.

9. When such disputes do arise at length to wrath, to angry strife, yea, and even to fixed enmity. What dreadful carnality is here! Most deservedly so called, if you only consider flesh, or carnality, as an unreasonable, a brutal thing. For what can be more unreasonable or unaccountable than to fall out with another man, because he thinks not as I do, or receives not my sentiments, as I also do not receive his. Is it not to be considered, that he no further differs from me than I do from him?

If there be a cause of anger upon this account, on one side, there is the same cause on the other too; and then whither shall this grow? And how little can this avail upon a rational estimate? Can any good come of it? Doth it tend to the clearing of truth? Shall we see the better through the clouds and dust we raised? Is a good cause served by it? Or do we think it possible the wrath of man should ever work the righteousness of God? And when such carnalities as these do exert themselves, and the hot steams and fumes arise, which the apostle here calls the lusts of the flesh, the flesh lusting to envy, lusting to wrath; what is the product (or even the productive cause) but that sort of fire which is without light? And you know what fire that resembles! And if a man once find any fervour of this kind stir or kindle in his breast, if he aright consider, he would no more cherish it, than one would do a brand thrown into his bosom from the infernal fire. One would think in this case, What have I stirring within me? something akin to hell! Can this conduce to the service of divine and heavenly truth? And let it be sadly considered; our being, upon such accounts angry with one another, is a dismal token of God's being angry with us all, and a provoking cause of it too. Methinks that should be a qualmy thought, and strike our souls with a strange damp! Shall I indulge that in myself, that is a mark upon me of divine displeasure; and upon all in whom it is found? To have this Holy Spirit retire, that blessed Spirit of love and of a sound mind, and to leave us under the power of a rebellious, lusting flesh; can this be grateful, or not be a dismaying, frightful thing? And whereas a right scheme of gospel-doctrine is the thing pretended to be striven for, I beseech you consider; the more entirely, and the more deeply, the true scheme of gospel-doctrine is inlaid in a man's soul, the more certainly it must form it all into meekness, humility, gentleness, love, kindness, and benignity towards fellow Christians of whatsoever denomination; not confined, not limited, (as that of the Pharisees) unto their own party; but diffusing and spreading itself to all that bear the character and cognizance of Christ. The Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ is a Spirit of greater amplitude; extends and diffuses itself through the whole body of Christ.

Nor can any man more effectually disgrace his own cause, or make sure to worst himself in it, than by defending it wrathfully. For admit that he err whom I oppose, a thousand to one but that my wrath is worse than his error; probably a thousand times worse. I go about therefore to take away a mote from his eye, having a beam in my own; or am more concerned for a misplaced hair upon his head, than I am for a fiery ulcer in my own breast. We are not, it is true, to be so stoical to condemn

the natural passion of anger, as such, for sinful. But if it exceeds its cause, and sets not with the sun, it becomes strange, unhallowed fire. But again, in the—

10th place: There is still a further appearance of great carnality in such cases, when any do adventure to judge of the consciences and states of them whom they oppose, or from whom they differ: when they ascend the tribunal, usurp the throne, pass sentence upon them, as men of no conscience, or of no sincerity, or uprightness of heart with God. As if theirs were to be the universal conscience, the measure of all consciences; and he that cannot be governed by their conscience must have none at all; or he be stark blind towards truth, towards God, and towards himself, that sees not every thing they see, or fancy themselves to see.

This is a most high usurpation upon divine prerogative; and how can any insensibly slide into such an evil as this, in the face of so plain and so awful a text of Scripture, that so severely animadverts upon it—that 14th to the Romans, in sundry verses of it? With what reverence and dread should it strike a man's soul in such a case! When we have the rights of the Redeemer asserted in those whom he hath bought with his blood; and are told that "for this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." *v.* 9. And it is thereupon further said to us, "Who art thou that judgest another's servant?" as *v.* 10. "Why dost thou judge thy brother, or set at nought thy brother? We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We are all of us his; he both died, and revived, and rose again, that he might be Lord of all," as Acts x. 36; and here of "dead and living;" *i. e.* that he might be owner of all, which is the first notion of *Dominus* or *Lord*, and in both worlds, the visible and the invisible, that into which many are dead, and deceased from hence, and so to us become invisible; and many that, yet surviving, are still visible to us: so ample is his dominion! And because the *jus imperii*, "the right of government," of which judgment is the last conclusive act, hath for its foundation the *jus dominii*, it is therefore asserted to him as the *coronis* and complement, the very *summity* of his acquired rights, that he is to finish all things by the last judgment, which must pass upon both the already dead, and the yet living. Thus is the ground of the expostulation laid: Who art thou who presumest to justle him out of this his supreme and most sacred right? Perhaps the matter disputed about may be doubtful, but there is no doubt concerning this incommunicable authority of our Lord Christ, or concerning his law against such judging. Matt. vii. 1. And to run into certain sin, in a furious chasing of uncer-

tain error, what consideration, what tenderness of offending, of affronting him, and of hazarding our own souls, is there in all this?

To judge other men's consciences is of so near affinity with governing them, that they that can allow themselves to do the former, want only power, not will or inclination, to offer at the other too. Which puts the matter out of doubt, that when men of this temper complain of such usurpation, it is not that they think it an offence in itself, but against them only; and that no consciences ought to be free, but their own. The proof of an honest and equal mind herein is, when we judge this to be evil, not being hurt by it; or abhor to hurt others in this kind, when we have power to do it. Upon which account that passage is memorable of the emperor Maximilian II. to a certain prelate, that there was no sin, no tyranny more grievous than to affect dominion over men's consciences; and that they who do so, go about to invade the tower of Heaven. A considerable saying from so great a prince, that lived and died in the Roman communion. What shall be thought of any such protestants, that without any colour or shadow of a ground, besides differing from them in some very disputable and unimportant opinions, shall presume to judge of other men's consciences, (and consequently of their states Godward) which such a one as he thought it so presumptuous wickedness to attempt to overrule or govern?

11. When we over-magnify our own understandings, and assume too much to ourselves; that is, do expect that our minds be taken for standards to all minds; as if *we*, of all mankind, were exempt from error, or the possibility of being mistaken. A certain sort of φιλαυτία or αὐθάδεια, an excess of love and admiration of ourselves, or over-pleasedness with ourselves, too much self-complacency, is the true (though very deep and most hidden) root of our common mischief in such cases. We wrap up ourselves within ourselves, and then we are all the world; do only compare ourselves with ourselves, never letting it enter into our minds that others have their sentiments too, perhaps wiser than ours; but abound in our own sense; and while (as the apostle in that case says) we are not wise, and perhaps are the only persons that think ourselves so, we yet take upon us, as if we were fit to dictate to the world, to all Christians, and to all mankind; or as if we only were the men, and wisdom must die with us.

This is a sort of evil, than which there is none more common and none less observed; none wherewith the guilty are so little apt to charge themselves, or admit conviction of it. For, I pray, do but consider; all the several differing parties amongst us do with one voice pretend to be for peace; but how, and

upon what terms? Why, that all the rest are presently to be of their mind; and that is all the peace that most are for. For where (scarce any where) is the man to be found, or how great a rarity is he, that entertains the thought, "That there may, for aught I know, be much to be redressed and corrected in my apprehensions of things, to make me capable of falling in with that truth which ought to be common to all." There is an expectation with many, of a good time and state of things, before this world end, when all shall be of one mind and judgment; but the most think it must be by all men's becoming of their mind and judgment. And of this self-conceit it is usually a harder thing to fasten conviction upon men, than of most other evils. We have more hope in speaking against drunkenness, murder, or any the grossest kind of wickedness; for there the conscience of the guilty falls in, and takes part with the reprover. But we can more easily, and more frequently do, (though not frequently enough) observe the faults of the inferior faculties, or of our external actions, than of the faculty itself which should observe. Our mind, which is naturally like our eye, is in this, too like, *i. e.* that it can see every thing but itself. It doth not, by using it, preserve its peculiar, self-reflecting power; is blind towards itself, beyond what naturally belongs to it. An object may be too near our bodily eye to be seen. Our mind is herein too bodily, too much carnalized, sunk too deep into flesh. It is the next thing to itself; and here, not by its primitive nature, (by which as an intellectual sun it could revert its beams, and turn them inward upon itself) but by depravation, it for the most part sees nothing; or doth worse, thinks itself to see what is not to be seen, certain imaginary excellencies, which make the man his own idol; an object of a sort of adoration to himself; and of scorn and derision (most probably) to every one else. In this case every man is, however, most commonly innocent in his own eyes, or still thinks he is in the right: amidst the so vast a variety of apprehensions and sentiments, no one suspects himself to be in the wrong. All are for the truth, and they are all for peace and union. By which some, indeed, more gently mean, they hope all will quit their former mistaken opinions and ways (as in great kindness to themselves they take for granted all men's are but their own) and come wholly over to them. Others that have not breasts capable of even so much charity as this, not only are as much lovers and admirers of themselves, but so vehement haters of all that presume to differ from them, that they think them not fit to live in the world, that durst adventure to do so. The meaning therefore of their being for peace, is, that they would have all destroyed that are not of their minds: and then (as the Roman historian speaks) *Quando solitudinem fecere, ap-*

pellant pacem: "when they have made a desolation, (so that they themselves are left alone in the world,) that they will call peace."

But you will say, What is to be done? Or what would I persuade in this case of differing apprehensions and ways still remaining among Christians? I answer, not presently to unbelieve all that ever a man hath believed before; or to abandon on the sudden his former sentiments, or to find fault with himself for having thought them right. For it is a contradiction to be of any opinion, and not then to think it right. Nor, therefore, is it scepticism, by any means, that I would advise to; as if there were nothing to be thought certain:—but this; that whereas the greatest and most necessary things in religion are most plain, that is, either most plain in themselves, or most expressly revealed in the word of God, here let us be stedfast ourselves, without being severe towards other men. Other things, that are more matter of doubt and dispute, by how much the less plain they are, we should count so much the less necessary. In reference, therefore, to these less momentous things, about which there is most of jangling, there ought always to be great modesty, and distrust of our own understandings, and a continued readiness to receive information, with constant looking up to the Father of lights for further illumination, and a resolution wherein we, with others, "have attained, to walk by the same rule, minding the same (agreed) things," hoping God will reveal his mind to the otherwise minded in his own time; as the apostle, in Phil. iii. 16, 17. But to hasten to a close, I further add in the—

Last place. Such carnality greatly shows itself in an affectation and desire of having such disputes still kept afoot, and the contests continued without either limit or rational design. This shows a deep tincture, and is a plain indication of a mind to a very great degree carnalized, when a mighty pleasure is taken to see the saw drawn, and the ball kept up. And if the question be asked, Pray how long? so little of reasonable answer can be given, that it might as well be said in plain terms, Till all words be spent, till speech or language fail, till Elias come, or doomsday come. So that if there were never so much reason to commend the having said somewhat in defence of this or that disputed point, we might yet say as Seneca did of Cicero's so much overpraising his own consulship, "I blame him not for praising it without cause, but for doing it without end;" or that he could never give over, or tell when he had said enough. Upon the same terms upon which it is now so much desired such disputes should be continued, when what is truly enough is already said, they might as well wish they always should: which signifies that when we say we would have men contend for truth, we wish it not so much for truth's sake, as for the contention's sake. By

all means, say they, strive for the truth: not that they care so much for truth, as for the strife. For in some circumstances there is not an end in view, that is rationally to be designed or served by it on this side the end of all things; nor consequently any good principle that is to be exercised or gratified thereby. What is needful to be said in the matters already referred to, for the informing and satisfying of tractable minds, sincerely willing to understand the truth, lies within a little compass. And when, in controversy, that is once said, which truly belongs to the very point in question, the rest is commonly trifling and reflexion, or the perplexing of the matter more, and "darkening counsel by words without knowledge." If love to truth be alleged for the principle that prompts men to covet so continual altercations about it, I would say this shows more want of love to it. For hereby they are diverted from that which renders it most of all amiable, and for which it ought chiefly to be loved; as it is the truth according to godliness, and by which we are to be sanctified, and begotten more and more (as of an immortal seed) into the divine likeness. Experience shows how little disputes better men's spirits. If we love divine truth, why do we not feed and live upon it, and enjoy its pleasant relishes; but relish gravel more, or chaff and bran? For thither the agitation of continued controversies about it doth soon sift it, the grain of flour (the kidney of the wheat) being passed away, and gone from us. Can none remember when the disputative humour had even eaten out the power and spirit of practical religion and godliness? Thither things are again tending, if, either by severity or mercy, (one may say, rather than not otherwise, by merciful severity) God do not prevent and repress that tendency. As yet I fear the humour is violent, when the fervour of men's spirits is such as to carry them over all Scripture directions, and animadversions, that they signify nothing with them; only make it their business each one to animate the more vogued champions of their own party into the highest ferments, and cry, "Dispute, dispute; write, write; preach, preach, one against another; let not the business go over so, do not keep silence." Thus are many, as the apostle speaks, puffed up for one against another. 1 Cor. iv. 6. And what, has such a text of Scripture as that no edge, no point, by which to lance, to pierce such a tumour? No, when the humour is once up, and has enwrapt men's hearts; is settled there, and hath obdured them to a brawny hardness; such texts of Scripture, though so mighty pat and apposite, are esteemed by them but as leviathan esteems spears and swords, like straw and rotten wood; they do not enter into men's hearts. A strange kind of obduration!

And how supposable is it that they who are so puffed up for

others, may also, through the known corruption of nature even in the best, do herein not a little to the puffing up of them too. The apostle's concluding of this chapter with those cautions, "Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another," immediately upon his renewing of the precept (*v.* 25) of walking in the Spirit; and immediately before those words, (*ch.* vi. 1,) "If a man be overtaken with a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness," shows how he understood the case to be with these Galatian Christians, that as to doctrinals were yet sound and unfallen: that there was yet such carnality working in their continued contests, (though for the truth;) such pride, such affectation of vain-glory, such wrathfulness, as showed it was not mere love to truth that kept up the contest, but some such worse principles. Nothing is plainer than that principles and ends measure one another. And when that is done, or coveted to be done, that serves no good end; or is so done, as not to serve but destroy, or hinder any end that is truly good; the principle must be very bad that moves the wheel. Disorderly, eccentric motions betray their principle and end together. When the carriage and conduct of an affair that carries with it the appearance of serving the truth, is impetuous, eager, precipitant; when there is no good end in view of the present so modified endeavour; when enough is agreed already to serve the most important ends, unity among brethren, the salvation of souls; and yet things are further insisted on, unnecessary to either, yea, prejudicial to both, and upon which the weight and stress of either of these cannot be laid without sin; it too plainly appears, vain-glory to one's self, or the slurring of a (designed) adversary, is the end; and then the principle is proportionable. Yet even in the light, and when matters are thus open and in view, oppositions are pushed on, and men's spirits rise to that pitch, as to bear down whatever is proposed only with design to make their career a little slower: yea, and they are apt, rather than hearken, to put opprobrious names and characters upon them that are not altogether so furious as themselves.

Nor have they themselves the patience to consider consequences, and whither these things tend: *i.e.* that God is provoked, that the souls of men are endangered, greatly endangered. I have found in my own conversation, that some even in distress, in agonies, have said, "Lord, be merciful to us, I know not which way to go; one preaches one thing, another preaches the quite contrary." I know they mistake; we do generally in substance preach the same gospel. Thanks be to God, his gospel is not confined to a few men, or to this or that party of men. But in the mean time, it is a thing of very ill consequence to lay

stumbling-blocks before the blind, bars and obstructions in the way of the weak and the lame, whereby they may be turned out of the way who should rather be strengthened.

It is not considered that where the danger is less of an utter ruin to the souls of men, there is, however, occasioned a great languor and enfeeblement. They should be considered, and treated, not only as being weak, but lest they should be made so. When they are diverted from the proper means of improvement and growth, and their minds are alienated from those means, being otherwise engaged, an ill habit is contracted; and when the distemper hath seized some, it spreads, and soon infects more. Nutriment is dispensed, from the head through the body, by the co-operation of the several parts, as those texts, Eph. iv. 16; Col. ii. 19, do with great emphasis and elegancy speak. Understand it so, that how far soever there is, or ought to be, actual communion, every limb and joint contributes something to the strength and vigour of the rest. So is nourishment ministered, and spreads itself in the body to its edifying itself in love; which love, if it fail, a universal languor cannot but ensue, the free circulation of vital spirits being obstructed and stopped. And those that are most sensible, if they be not so much otherwise damnified, cannot, when they observe it, but be grieved, and take it bitterly to heart, when the tokens appear to their view of a general decay. The living members of any body are pained, when the body is wasted and rent; dead, or stupified, and benumbed members feel it not, are unapprehensive. But above all, it ought to be considered, (and how little is it!) that the Holy Spirit is grieved, and doth (as we may fear it will more) sensibly retire: the gospel in which it is wont to breathe is trifled with; the glorious gospel, the gospel of the grace of God, (can men find nothing else to play with?) by which that blessed Spirit hath begotten many a soul to God, and nourished them unto life eternal. That precious thing, designed for so great and sacred purposes, (as pampered, wanton children do with their food) they dally with, or quarrel about it, or squander and throw it away. How can this but offend? The self procured distempers which did precede, and those that ensue, increase the offence. When it is said, (Eph. iv. 30,) "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,"—and presently subjoined, (*v.* 31,) "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away;" is it not left to us to collect, that these things do more peculiarly grieve the Spirit?—that Spirit of grace, of all love, goodness, sweetness, and benignity. There is but one body, and one Spirit, a Spirit that spreads vital influence in the body. What can you think of that Spirit that feels every where; that is in the body a universal sentient? How can that Spirit but be

grieved? Passion it is not capable of; but just and sedate displacency, that matters should be so. How should any of us like it, to have our living body torn limb from limb, and part from part! Though with him real commotion and disturbance can have no place, intellectual resentment is infinitely greater and deeper than we can either feel or conceive.

But where this angry, tumified, proud flesh is the governing thing, none of these tremendous consequences or considerations, while it is so, take any place. The litigious, quarrelsome genius will throw off all, will find no leisure or room for a calm thought: but though the course in which we are engaged should be ready to set on fire the whole course of nature, will be still for casting abroad firebrands, and arrows, and death; and make us think this fine sport! If, indeed, there were room for any cooler thoughts, one would think such as these should not lie remote:—How little any of us know, or are capable of knowing in this our present state! that they that think they know most, or are most conceited of their own knowledge, know nothing as they ought to know; that they that are most apt to contend, do most of all fight in the dark; that it is too possible there may be much knowledge without love; how little such knowledge is worth; that it profits nothing; that it hurts, puffs up, when love edifies; that the devils know more than any of us, while their want of love, or their hellish malignity, makes them devils; that as by pride comes contention, so humility would contribute more to peace, (and to the discerning of truth too) than the most fervent disceptation; that there is no hope of proselyting the world to my opinion or way; that if I cannot be quiet till I have made such and such of my mind, I shall still be unquiet while *others* are not of it, that is, always: that if some one's judgment must be a standard to the world, there are thousands fitter for it than mine; that they that in their angry contests think to shame their adversary, do commonly most of all shame themselves.

But to close all, I pray let us consider; we are, professedly, going to heaven, that region of light, and life, and purity, and love. It well, indeed, becomes them that are upon the way thither modestly to inquire after truth. Humble, serious, diligent endeavours to increase in divine knowledge, are very suitable to our present state of darkness and imperfection. The product of such inquiries we shall carry to heaven with us, with whatsoever is most akin thereto, (besides their usefulness in the way thither.) We shall carry truth, and the knowledge of God to heaven with us; we shall carry purity thither, devotedness of soul to God and our Redeemer, divine love and joy, if we have their beginnings here, with whatsoever else of real, permanent excellency that hath a settled, fixed seat and place

in our souls now; and shall there have them in perfection. But do we think we shall carry strife to heaven? Shall we carry anger to heaven? envyings, heart-burnings, animosities, enmities, hatred of our brethren and fellow Christians; shall we carry these to heaven with us?

Let us labour to divest ourselves, and strike off from our spirits every thing that shall nôt go with us to heaven, or is equally unsuitable to our end and way; that there may be nothing to obstruct and hinder our abundant entrance at length into the everlasting kingdom.

A SERMON

CONCERNING

UNION AMONG PROTESTANTS;

A DISCOURSE,

ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTION,

"WHAT MAY MOST HOPEFULLY BE ATTEMPTED TO ALLAY ANIMOSITIES AMONG PROTESTANTS, THAT OUR DIVISIONS MAY NOT BE OUR RUIN?"

COL. ii. 2.

That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.

THIS question is propounded to me;—"What may most hopefully be attempted to allay animosities among Protestants, that our divisions may not be our ruin?" I must here, in the first place, tell you how I understand this question. First, as to the *end*, the preventing our ruin; I take the meaning chiefly to be, not the ruin of our estates, trade, houses, families; not *our* ruin, in these respects, who are Christians, but our ruin as we are Christians, *i.e.* the ruin of our Christianity itself, or of the truly Christian interest among us. Secondly, as for the *means* inquired after, I understand not the question to intend what is to be done or attempted by laws, and public constitutions, as if our business were to teach our absent rulers, or prescribe to them what they should do, to whom we have no present call, or opportunity, to apply ourselves. Nor, again, can it be thought our business to discuss the several questions that are controverted among us, and show, in each, what is the truth and right, wherewith every man's conscience ought to be satisfied, and in which we should all meet and

unite: as if we had the vanity to think of performing, by an hour's discourse, what the voluminous writings of some ages have not performed. Much less are we to attempt the persuading of any to go against an already formed judgment in these points of difference, for the sake of union; and to seek the peace of the church, by breaking their peace with God, and their own consciences.

But I take the question only to intend what serious Christians may, and ought, to endeavour in their private capacities, and agreeably with their own principles, towards the proposed end. And so I conceive the words read to you contain the materials of a direct and full answer to the question. Which I reckon will appear,—by opening the case the apostle's words have reference to; that will be found a case like our own; and—by opening the words, whereby their suitableness to *that case* will be seen, and, consequently, to *our case* also.

First. The case which these words have reference to (as indeed the general aspect of the epistle, and great part of the other apostolical letters, look much the same way) was in short this:—That a numerous sect was already sprung up, that began (so early) to corrupt the simplicity and purity of the Christian religion, and very much to disturb the peace of the Christian church. A sort they were of partly Judaizing, partly paganizing Christians, the disciples, as they are reputed, of Simon Magus, who joined with the name Christian the rites and ceremonies of the Jews, with the impurities (even in worship) of the gentiles, denying the more principal doctrines, and hating the holy design of Christianity itself, while they seemed to have assumed, or to retain the name, as it were on purpose the more effectually to wound and injure the Christian cause and interest: men of high pretence to knowledge (whence they had the title of Gnostics) filched partly from the Jewish cabalism, partly from the Pythagorean; by which pretence they insinuated the more plausibly with such as affected the knowledge of more hidden mysteries. Whereto the apostle seems to have reference, where he adds, immediately after the text, "that in Christ were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," (*v.* 3,) and says, he did purposely add it, "lest any man should beguile them with enticing words;" intimating, there was no need to follow those vain pretenders, out of an affectation of sublimer knowledge, and forsake Christ in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were hid.

Of the progress and genius of this sect, not only some of the fathers of the church give an account,* but even a noted philosopher† among the heathens, who writes professedly against

* Clemens Alexandr. Irenæus, Epiphanius, &c.

† Plotinus, Ennead, 2. l. 9.

them, (though not a word against Christians as such;) both making it his business to refute their absurd doctrines (that the world was in its nature evil, and not made by God, but by some evil angel, &c.) and representing them as men of most immoral principles and practices; worse, both in respect of their notions and morals, than Epicurus himself. It appears this sort of men did, in the apostles' days, not only set themselves, with great art and industry, to pervert as many professors of Christianity as they could, but found means (as they might by their compliances with the Jews, who were then much spread, and numerously seated in sundry principal cities under the Roman power, and who were every where the bitterest enemies to Christianity) to raise persecution against those whom they could not pervert, which some passages seem to intimate in the epistle to the Galatians (who, as that whole epistle shows, were much leavened by this sect, insomuch that the apostle is put to travail as in birth again, to have Christ formed in them, and to reduce them back to sincere Christianity,) *viz.* that some leaders of this sect so set the people's minds even against the apostle himself, that he began to be reputed by them as an enemy, (*ch.* iv. 16,) and was persecuted under that notion, because he would not comply with them in the matter of circumcision (urged as an engagement to the whole law of Moses, *ch.* v. 11,) "If I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased:" and that they were as mischievous as they could be to fellow Christians, on the same account, biting and devouring them that received not their corrupting additions to Christianity, as the circumstances of the text show. *v.* 15.

How like a case is this to ours, with our popish enemies, I need not tell you. And now in this case; when the faith of many was overthrown, so much hurt was already done, and the danger of greater was so manifest, partly by the most insinuating methods of seduction, partly by the terror of persecution, the great care was to secure the uncorrupted residue, and preserve unextinct the true Christian interest.

The urgency of this case puts the solicitous, concerned spirit of this great apostle, into an inexpressible agony, as his words do intimate; I would you knew what conflict I have, and not for these Colossians only, but for them of Laodicea (which was not very remote from Colosse), and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh: for it was a common case, and upon him lay the care of all the churches. So that hence his musing, meditative mind, could not but be revolving many thoughts, and casting about for expedients, how the threatening danger might be obviated and averted. And these in the text, which he fastens upon, and wherein his thoughts centre, how apt and proper

they were to that case (and consequently to ours, which so little differs,) will be seen,—

Secondly, By our opening and viewing the import of the text itself: wherein he

1. Proposes to himself *the end* which he apprehended was most desirable, and above all things to be coveted for them: that their hearts might be comforted. A word of much larger signification than in vulgar acceptation it is understood to be. Παρακαλέω signifies (with profane as well as the sacred writers) not only to administer consolation to a grieved mind, but to exhort, quicken, excite, and animate, to plead and strive with dull and stupid, wavering and unresolved minds. It was thought, indeed, comprehensive enough to express all the operations of the divine Spirit upon the souls of men, when not only the Christian church, but the world, yet to be Christianized, was to be the subject of them, as we see, John xvi. 8. In respect whereof that Holy Spirit hath its name of office, *the Paraclete,* from this word. And it being the passive that is here used, it signifies not only the endeavours themselves which are used to the purpose here intended, but the effect of them wherein they all terminate, a lively, vigorous, confirmed state and habit of soul: and that not indefinite, but determined to one thing, the Christian faith and profession, which the apostle's drift and scope plainly show. It is not to be thought he so earnestly coveted and strove, that they might be jocund, cheerful, abounding with joy and courage, in any course, right or wrong; but that they might be encouraged, established, confirmed in their Christianity. And if the word he here uses were large enough to signify (as was noted above) all that was necessary to make men Christians, it may as well, all that is necessary to continue them such.

In short, the end which the apostle aims at, the παράκλησις intended to these Christians, was their establishment and confirmed state in their Christianity, as the effect of all apostolical or ministerial exhortations, persuasions, encouragements, or any whatsoever endeavours; made efficacious to that purpose by the powerful influence, and operation, of the Holy Ghost. And that it was no lower thing than this, we have sufficient evidence, by comparing the close of the foregoing chapter with the beginning of this; where we find, (*ch.* i. 28,) the avowed design of his preaching, warning, and teaching in all wisdom, was that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. That whereas there were various arts and endeavours used to adulterate the Christian religion, and pervert men from the simplicity of it, he might lose none; but to his very uttermost keep all in a possibility of being presented perfect in Christ Jesus at last, *i.e.* that they might be all entire, complete, and persevering Christians to

the end. And for this he adds, (*v.* 29,) he did labour, striving according to his working, which wrought in him mightily. All his labour, and the strivings of his soul, acted by divine power, and by a Spirit greater than his own, did aim at this end. And now, hereupon, he intimates how fervid these his strivings were, (*ch.* ii. 1,) I would you did but know (what it is not for me to say) ἡλικόν ἀγῶνα, what an *agony* I endure! how great this my conflict is for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh! And for what? That their hearts might be comforted (as we read) meaning manifestly the same thing he had expressed before; that, notwithstanding all endeavours of others to the contrary, they might be complete and confirmed Christians to the last.

2. We have next to consider in the text the means, or what expedients the apostle conceives would be most effectually conducing, to this blessed purpose. They are two,—mutual love to one another;—and a clear, certain, efficacious faith of the gospel. The former is shortly and plainly expressed; the other by a copious and most emphatical *periphrasis*, or circumlocution. He most earnestly covets to have them knit together by both (συμβιβασθέντων, "compacted," as the word imports,) in the one, ἐν ἀγάπῃ, and unto or into the other, as that particle signifies, εἰς πάντα, &c.

Mutual love to one another: *q. d.* the thing were done, or much were done towards it, if they were knit together in love, compacted, made all of a piece; if by love they did firmly cohere, and cleave to one another: for then it would be one and all: and it is scarce ever supposable they should all agree to quit their religion at once. But if that were to be supposed, he adds another thing that would put all out of doubt.

A clear, certain, efficacious faith of the gospel. For the several expressions that follow are but a description of such a faith. Where we are to note,—what he would have them apprehend:—and the apprehensive principle.

What he would have them apprehend: viz. the sum and substance of the Christian doctrine, which he calls a mystery, both because it was so in itself, and it is often spoken of under that name, by our Lord himself, (Matt. xiii. 11;) and familiarly by this apostle, (Rom. xvi. 25; Ephes. iii. 3, 9; Col. i. 26,) and elsewhere: and because of the high pretence of the Gnostics to the knowledge of mysteries, which sometimes he slights; especially being unaccompanied with love, as, with them, it most eminently was; "though I understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have no charity, I am nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 2. "Knowledge puffeth up—love edifies." *ch.* viii. 1. Sometimes, as here, he makes the sincere doctrine of the gospel to outvie theirs herein, intimating that such as made profession of it could have no

temptation to go over to them for the knowledge of mysteries, (unless a mystery of iniquity were more pleasing to them), whose very religion was that great mystery of godliness, "God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Now this mystery he, first, more generally characterizes by calling it the *mystery of God*, a divine mystery, not made one by merely human fiction; and then he very distinctly specifies it in the following words, *and of the Father and of Christ.* Where the former *and*, needs not be thought copulative, but exegetical, and might be read *even*, or *to wit*, or it may be read *both*, as it is usual with the Greeks as well as Latins when the copulative is to be repeated, so to read the former. As if it were said, By the mystery of God, I mean, not of God alone, and abstractly considered; as if it were enough to you to be mere deists; and that the whole superadded revelation concerning the Mediator, might be looked upon with indifferency or neglect; (as by the Gnostics it was known then to be, and afterwards by some of their great leaders, in the substance of it, with downright hatred and opposition;) but that which I so earnestly covet for you, and wherein I would have you unite, and be all one, is the acknowledgment of the whole mystery of God; *i. e.* both of Father and of Christ.

The apprehensive principle; which we may, by a general name, call faith, and accommodately enough to the name here given us of its object, a mystery which is elsewhere called "the mystery of faith," (1 Tim. iii. 9,) or a mystery to be believed; faith being the known principle of receiving the gospel revelation. But he here expresses it by words that signify knowledge, σύνεσις and ἐπίγνωσις, thereby intimating that the faith of Christians is not to be a blind and unintelligent principle, but that though there were contained in the gospel mysteries never to be understood if God had not afforded a special revelation of them on purpose, yet, being revealed, we ought to have a clear and distinct, as well as lively and practical perception of them. By these two words, and the other expressions he joins in with the former, he seems to intimate two sorts of properties which belong to that faith of the gospel which he wishes to them. First, The rectitude, clearness, and certainty of notion. Secondly, The efficacy, impressiveness, and immediate aptitude to have influence upon practice, which he would have it carry with it. The latter properties supposing, and depending on the former, he there highly exaggerates the matter, and heaps together expressions that might with most lively emphasis set forth the kind of that knowledge which he conceives would be of so great use to them. He wishes them a σύνεσις, a clear,

perspicacious knowledge, and an assurance; even to a *plerophory*, a *fulness of assurance*, in their knowledge of the truth of the gospel. Yea, he wishes them the *riches*, πλοῦτον, yea, and *all riches*, πάντα πλοῦτον τῆς πληροφορίας, of that full assurance, or *plerophory* of understanding, and knowledge of that truth; apprehending that this would certainly fix them in their faith and profession, so as they would never recede from it. As when in Christ's own days "many went back and walked no more with him," (John vi. 66,) that which retained others, (so that when Christ asks, "Will ye also go away?" *v.* 67, they presently answer, "Lord, to whom shall we go?") was, that what they believed of him was of greatest importance to them—"Thou hast the words of eternal life," (*v.* 68:) so their belief was with that assurance as to exclude all suspicion or doubt in the case, "and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God," (*v.* 69,) and therefore neither canst want power to confer eternal life, as all thy words do import thy design and promise to do, nor truth to make good thy own plain words. And then he also knew that such a σύνεσις, or "knowledge," would produce, what he further wishes them, an ἐπίγνωσις, an "acknowledgment," an inward, vital owning, a cordial embrace, a lively perception of the same blessed truths, which must needs further most abundantly contribute to this their so much desired joint and unanimous stability.

And now these are the two expedients by which he reckons they would be so closely compacted together as that no subtilty or violence could endanger them; mutual love, and a clear, certain, operative faith of the gospel: if by the one they did cohere with each other; and by the other, adhere to God in Christ; if the one might have with them the place, power and bindingness of a cement, the other of a continual inclination, yieldingness, and compliance to the magnetism of the centre, they would never so fall asunder as to give any enemies opportunity to be the successful authors, or the gratified spectators, of their ruin. Thus, therefore, I would sum up the sense of this Scripture, and the answer to the question proposed:—"That the maintaining of sincere love among Christians, and the improving of their faith to greater measures of clearness, certainty and efficacy in reference to the substantials of Christianity, are to be endeavoured as the best means to unite, establish, and preserve them, against such as design the ruin of the truly Christian interest."—The case was at that time urging and important. A great and numerous party was formed, of such as did nauseate the simplicity of the Christian religion, and hate the true design of it. All the care was what course was most proper and suitable to preserve the rest. And you see what was then thought most proper. Counsel was not taken to this effect (and there-

fore Christians in a private capacity should not covet to have it so,) "Let us bind them by certain devised preter-evangelical canons to things never thought fit to be enjoined by Christ himself, severely urge the strict and uniform observance of them, make the terms of Christian communion straiter than he ever made them, add new rituals of our own to his institutions, and cut off from us all that (never so conscientiously) scruple them." No, this was the practice of their common enemies, and it was to narrow and weaken the too much already diminished Christian interest. The order mentioned (*v.* 5) might be comely enough, without things that were both unnecessary and offensive.

Nor was it consulted and resolved to agitate the controversy about this power and practice, in perpetual, endless disputations, and stigmatize them that should not be enlightened and satisfied in these matters, as schismatical and wilful; though they never so sincerely adhered to the doctrine, and observed the laws of Christ; *i. e.* it was neither thought fit to urge the unsatisfied upon doubtful things, against their consciences: nor to take order that continual endeavours should be used from age to age to satisfy them, or that the church should be always vexed with vain controversies about needless things; that, if they were never so lawful, might as well be let alone, without detriment to the Christian cause, and perhaps to its greater advantage. Yea, the attempt of imposing any thing upon the disciples but what was necessary, is judged a tempting of God, (Acts xv. 10,) a bringing the matter to a trial of skill with him, whether he could keep the church quiet, when they took so direct a course to distemper and trouble it. But it was thought necessary, and sufficient, that all did unite, and were knit together in the mutual love of one another, and in a joint adherence to the great mysteries of faith and salvation.

In the same case, when there were so many antichrists abroad, and (it is likely) Ebion with his partakers made it their business to pervert the Christian doctrine, the same course is taken by the blessed apostle St. John, only to endeavour the strengthening of these two vital principles, faith in Christ and love to fellow Christians, as may be seen at large in his epistles. These he presses, as the great commandments, upon the observation whereof, he seems to account, the safety and peace of the sincere did entirely depend. "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." 1 Epistle iii. 23. He puts upon Christians no other distinguishing test, but, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God:" and, "Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him," (*ch.* v. 1;) is only solicitous that they did

practise the commandment they had from the beginning, *i. e.* that they loved one another, (2 Epist. 5,) and that they did abide in the doctrine of Christ. *v.* 9.

The prudence and piety of those unerring guides of the church, (themselves under the certain guidance of the Spirit of truth) directed them to bring the things wherein they would have Christians unite, within as narrow a compass as was possible, neither multiplying articles of faith, nor rites of worship. These two principles (as they were thought to answer the apostle's) would fully answer our design and present inquiry. And we may adventure to say of them that they are both sufficient, and necessary; the apt and the only means to heal and save us; such as would effect our cure, and without which nothing will.

Nor shall I give other answer to the proposed question, than what may be deduced from these two, considered according to what they are in themselves, and what they naturally lead and tend unto. I shall consider them in the order wherein the apostle here mentions them, who you see reserves the more important of them to the latter place.

First. The sincere *love* of Christians to one another would be a happy means of preserving the truly Christian interest among us. That this may be understood, we must rightly apprehend what kind of love it is that is here meant. It is specified by what we find in conjunction with it, the understanding, and acknowledgment of the mystery of Christianity. Therefore it must be the love of Christians to one another as such. Whence we collect, lest we too much extend the object of it on the one hand, or contract it on the other,—

1. That it is not the love only which we owe to one another as men, or human creatures merely, that is intended here. That were too much to enlarge it, as to our present consideration of it. For, under that common notion, we should be as much obliged to love the enemies we are to unite against, as the friends of religion we are to unite with, since all partake equally in human nature. It must be a more especial love that shall have the desired influence in the present case. We cannot be peculiarly endeared and united to some more than to others, upon a reason that is common to them with others. We are to love them that are born of God, and are his children, otherwise than the children of men, or such of whom it may be said, they are of their father the devil; them that appear to have been partakers of a divine nature at another rate, than them who have received a mere human, or also the diabolical nature. 1 John v. 1. Yet this peculiar love is not to be exclusive of the other which is common, but must suppose it, and be superadded to it, as the reason of it is superadded.

For Christianity supposes humanity; and divine grace, human nature.

2. Nor is it a love to Christians of this or that party or denomination only. That were as much unduly to straiten and confine it. The love that is owing to Christians as such, as it belongs to them only, so it belongs to *all* them who, in profession and practice, do own sincere and incorrupt Christianity. To limit our Christian love to a party of Christians, truly so called, is so far from serving the purpose now to be aimed at, that it resists and defeats it; and instead of a preservative union, infers most destructive divisions. It scatters what it should collect and gather. It is to love factiously; and with an unjust love, that refuses to give indifferently to every one his due: (for is there no love due to a disciple of Christ in the name of a disciple?) it is founded in falsehood, and a lie, denies them to be of the Christian community who really are so. It presumes to remove the ancient landmarks, not civil but sacred, and draws on, not the people's curse only, but that of God himself. It is true (and who doubts it?) that I may and ought upon special reasons to love some more than others; as relation, acquaintance, obligation by favours received from them, more eminent degrees of true worth, and real goodness; but that signifies nothing to the withholding of that love which is due to a Christian as such; as that also ought not to prejudice the love I owe to a man, as he is a man.

Nor am I so promiscuously to distribute this holy love, as to place it, at random, upon every one that thinks it convenient for him to call himself a Christian, though I ought to love the very profession, while I know not who sincerely makes it, and do plainly see that Jews and pagans were never worse enemies to Christ and his religion, than a great part of the Christian world. But let my apprehensions be once set right concerning the true essentials of Christianity, (whether consisting in doctrinal or vital principles,) then will my love be duly carried to all in whom they are found, under one common notion, which I come actually to apply to this or that person, as particular occasions do occur; and so shall always be in a preparation of mind actually to unite in Christian love with every such person, whensoever such occasions do invite me to it. And do we now need to be told what such an impartial truly Christian love would do to our common preservation, and to prevent the ruin of the Christian interest?

(1.) How greatly would it contribute to the vigour of the Christian life! For so we should all equally "hold the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God:" as afterwards in this chapter, *v.* 19. Thus (as it is in

that other parallel text of Scripture) "speaking the truth in love, we shall grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love." Eph. iv. 15, 16. Obstructions that hinder the free circulation of blood and spirits, do not more certainly infer languishings in the natural body, than the want of such a diffusive love shuts up and shrivels the destitute parts, and hinders the diffusion of a nutritive vital influence in the body of Christ.

(2.) It would inspire Christians generally with a sacred courage and fortitude, when they should know, and even feel themselves knit together in love. How doth the revolt of any considerable part of an army discourage the rest; or if they be not entire, and of a piece! Mutual love animates them, as nothing more, when they are prepared to live and die together, and love hath before joined, whom now their common danger also joins. They otherwise signify but as so many single persons, each one but caring and contriving how to shift for himself. Love makes them significant to one another. So as that every one understands himself to be the common care of all the rest. It makes Christians the more resolute in their adherence to truth and goodness, when (from their not-doubted love) they are sure of the help, the counsels and prayers of the Christian community; and apprehend, by their declining, they shall grieve those whom they love, and who they know love them. If any imagine themselves intended to be given up, as sacrifices, to the rage of the common enemy, their hearts are the apter to sink, they are most exposed to temptations to prevaricate, and the rest will be apt to expect the like usage from them, if themselves be reduced to the like exigency, and be liable to the same temptations.

(3.) It would certainly, in our present case, extinguish or abate the so contrary unhallowed fire of our anger and wrath towards one another; as the celestial beams do the baser culinary fire, which burns more fervently when the sun hath less power. Then would debates, if there must be any, be managed without intemperate heat. We should be remote from being angry that we cannot convey our own sentiments into another's mind; which, when we are, our business is the more remote; we make ourselves less capable of reasoning aptly to convince, and (because anger begets anger, as love doth love) render the other less susceptible of conviction. Why are we yet to learn that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God? What is gained by it? So little doth angry contention about small matters avail, that even they that happen to have the better cause lose by it, and their advantage cannot recompense the

damage and hurt that ensues to the church and to themselves. Our famous Davenant, (*Sent. ad Dur.*) speaking of the noted controversy between Stephen, bishop of Rome, who, he says, as much as in him lay, did with a schismatical spirit tear the church, and Cyprian, who with great lenity and Christian charity professes that he would not break the Lord's peace for diversity of opinion, nor remove any from the right of communion, concludes that erring Cyprian deserved better of the church of Christ than orthodox Stephen. He thought him the schismatic, whom he thought in the right, and that his orthodoxy (as it was accompanied) was more mischievous to the church, than the other's error. Nor can a man do that hurt to others, without suffering it more principally. The distemper of his own spirit, what can recompense? and how apt is it to grow in him; and, while it grows in himself, to propagate itself among others! Whereupon, if the want of love hinders the nourishment of the body, much more do the things which, when it is wanting, are wont to fill up its place. For as naturally as love begets love, so do wrath, envy, malice, calumny, beget one another, and spread a poison and virulency through the body, which necessarily wastes and tends to destroy it. How soon did the Christian church cease to be itself: and the early vigour of primitive Christianity degenerate into insipid, spiritless formality, when once it became contentious! It broke into parties, sects multiplied, animosities grew high, and the grieved Spirit of love retired from it! which is grieved by nothing more than by bitterness, wrath, anger, &c. as the connection of these two verses intimates, (Eph. iv. 30, 31,) "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." And to the same purpose is that, (1 Peter ii. 1, 2,) "Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." By this means religion, once dispirited, loses its majesty and awfulness, and even tempts and invites the assaults and insultation of enemies.

(4.) It would oblige us to all acts of mutual kindness and friendship. If such a love did govern in us, we should be always ready to serve one another in love, to bear each other's burdens, to afford our mutual counsel and help to one another, even in our private affairs, if called thereto: especially in that which is our common concern, the preserving and promoting the interest of religion; and to our uttermost strengthen each other's hands herein. It would engage us to a free, amicable conversation with one another, upon this account; would not let us do so absurd a thing as to

confine our friendship to those of our own party, which we might, as reasonably, to men of our own stature, or to those whose voice, and air, and look, and mien, were likest our own. It would make us not be ashamed to be seen in each other's company, or be shy of owning one another. We should not be to one another as Jews and Samaritans that had no dealing with one another, or as the poet notes they were to other nations; *Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti*, "not so much as to show the way to one not of their religion." There would be no partition-wall through which love would not easily open a way of friendly commerce, by which we should insensibly slide, more and more, into one another's hearts. Whence also,—

(5.) Prejudices would cease, and jealousies concerning each other. A mutual confidence would be begotten. We should no more suspect one another of ill designs upon each other, than lest our right hand should wait an opportunity of cutting off the left. We should believe one another in our mutual professions, of whatsoever sort, both of kindness to one another, and that we really doubt and scruple the things which we say we do.

(6.) This would hence make us earnestly covet an entire union in all the things wherein we differ, and contribute greatly to it. We are too prone many times to dislike things, for the disliked persons' sake who practise them. And a prevailing disaffection makes us unapt to understand one another; precludes our entrance into one another's mind and sense: which, if love did once open, and inclined us more to consider the matters of difference themselves, than to imagine some reserved meaning and design of the persons that differ from us, it is likely we might find ourselves much nearer to one another, than we did apprehend we were; and that it were a much easier step for the one side to go quite over to the other. But if that cannot be,—

(7.) It would make us much more apt to yield to one another, and abate all that we ever can, in order to as full an accommodation as is any way possible, that if we cannot agree upon either extreme, we might at least meet in the middle. It would cause an emulation who should be larger in their grants to this purpose: as it was professed by Luther when so much was done at Marpurg towards an agreement between him and the Helvetians, that he would not allow that praise to the other party that they should be more desirous of peace and concord than he. Of which amicable conference, and of that afterwards at Wittenburg, and several other negotiations to that purpose, account is given by divers;* and insisted on by some of our own great divines as precedential to the concord they endeavoured between the Saxon and the Helvetian churches of later time, as Bishop Morton, Bishop Hall, Bishop Davenant, in

* Hospinian. Histor. Sacramentar. Thuanus, &c. Though, by Scultetus's account, that pretence was too little answered.

their several sentences or judgments written to Mr. Dury upon that subject.

And, indeed, when I have read the pacific writings of those eminent worthies, for the composing of those differences abroad, I could not but wonder that the same peaceable spirit did not endeavour with more effect the composing of our own much lesser differences at home. But the things of our peace were (as they still are) hid from our eyes, with the more visibly just severity, by how much they have been nearer us, and more obvious to the easy view of any but an averse eye. It is not for us to prescribe (as was said) to persons that are now in so eminent stations as these were at that time. But may we not hope to find with such (and where should we rather expect to find it?) that compassion and mercifulness in imitation of the blessed Jesus, their Lord and ours, as to consider and study the necessities of souls in these respects, and at least willingly to connive at, and very heartily approve some indulgences and abatements in the administrations of the inferior clergy, as they may not think fit themselves positively to order and enjoin? Otherwise I believe it could not but give some trouble to a conscientious conforming minister, if a sober pious person, sound in the faith, and of a regular life, should tell him he is willing to use his ministry, in some of the ordinances of Christ, if only he would abate or dispense with some annexed ceremony which in conscience he dare not use or admit of. I believe it would trouble such a minister to deal with a person of this character as a pagan because of his scruple; and put him upon considering whether he ought not rather to dispense with man's rule, than with God's. I know what the same bishop Davenant hath expressly said, that "He that believes the things contained in the apostles' creed, and endeavours to live a life agreeable to the precepts of Christ, ought not to be expunged from the roll of Christians, nor be driven from communion with the other members of any church whatsoever." (Ibid.) However, truly Christian love would do herein all that it can, supplying the rest by grief that it can do no more.

(8.) It would certainly make us abstain from mutual censures of one another, as insincere, for our remaining differences. Charity that thinks no evil, would make us not need the reproof, (Rom. xiv. 4,) "Who art thou that judgest another's servant?" The common aptness hereunto among us shows how little that divine principle rules in our hearts, that in defiance of our rule, and the authority of the great God and our blessed Redeemer, to whom all judgment is committed, and who hath so expressly forbidden us to judge lest we be judged, (Matt. vii. 7,) we give ourselves so vast a liberty; and set no other bounds to our usurped licence of judging, than nature hath set to our

power of thinking, *i. e.* think all the mischievous thoughts of them that differ from us that we know how to devise or invent, as if we would say, "Our thoughts (and then, by an easy advance, our tongues) are our own, who is Lord over us?" I animadvert not on this as the fault of one party, but wheresoever it lies, as God knows how diffused a poison this is, among them that are satisfied with the public constitutions towards them, that dissent from them, and with these back again towards them, and with the several parties of both these towards one another. This uniting, knitting love would make us refrain, not merely from the restraint of God's laws in this case, but from a benign disposition, as that which the temper of our spirits would abhor from. So that such as are well content with the public forms and rites of worship, would have no inclination to judge them that apprehend not things with their understandings, nor relish with their taste, as persons that therefore have cut themselves off from Christ, and the body of Christ. They might learn from the Cassandrian moderation, and from the avowed sentiments of that man* (whose temper is better to be liked than his terms of union) who, speaking of such as, being formerly rejected (meaning the protestants) for finding fault with abuses in the church, had by the urgency of their conscience altered somewhat in the way of their teaching, and the form of their service, and are therefore said to have fallen off from the church, and are numbered among heretics and schismatics; "It is, saith he, to be inquired how rightly and justly this is determined of them. For there are to be considered, as to the church, the head and the body. From the head there is no departure but by doctrine disagreeable to Christ the head; from the body there is no departure by diversity of rites and opinions, but only by the defect of charity." So that this learned Romanist neither thinks them heretics that hold the head, nor schismatics, for such differences as ours are, from the rest of the body, if love and charity towards them remain. And again, where this love remains, and bears rule, it can as little be, that they who are unsatisfied with the way of worship that more generally obtains, should censure them that are satisfied, as insincere, merely because of this difference. It cannot permit that we should think all the black thoughts we can invent of them, as if because they have not our consciences they had none, or because they see not with our eyes, they were therefore both utterly and wilfully blind. To be here more particular; the most, you know, are for the public way of worship; and of these, some are for it as tolerable only, others as the best way, and think all other ways of worshipping God in assemblies (being forbidden as they think by a just law) sinful.

* Cassander, de officio pii ac publicæ tranquillitatis vere amantis viri.

Others, dissenting, are of several sorts. Some think the conformity required of *ministers* sinful, because of previous terms required of them which they judge to be so; but not that which is required of the *people*. Of which sort, some that think it not simply unlawful, find it however less edifying to them: and though they can therefore partake in it at some times, think themselves more ordinarily bound to attend such other means as they find more conducing to their spiritual profit and advantage; judging they have an undoubted right from Christ, anciently allowed from age to age in the best times of the Christian church, and never justly taken from them, of choosing the pastors to whose ordinary care and conduct, they shall commit their souls. Others judge the public way simply unlawful, and therefore judge themselves bound to decline it wholly; and are the more averse to any participation in it, as apprehending it to have no suitableness or aptitude to profit their souls; wherein they are the more confirmed that they believe not God will ever bless the means which he hath not appointed. Now how apt all these are unto very severe censures of one another, he knows not the age who is ignorant. One sort censuring the other as humoursome, factious, schismatical; the others them back again, as formal, popishly affected, destitute of any savour of spiritual things, having nothing of God in them, or of the life and power of godliness.

Now is this suitable to the love that should rule among Christians? or to the reverence we ought to have for that authority that forbids such judging? It ought to be considered, both that all have not the same understanding, nor the same gust and relish of things.

Not the same *understanding*. And therefore where conscience hath the same rule, it cannot have, with every one, the same actual latitude, that rule being so very diversely understood; which different estimate of consciences, the apostle hath express reference to, in that large and most healing discourse of his, Rom. xiv. "One (saith he, *v.* 2) believeth that he may eat all things, another, who is weak, eateth herbs." Nor doth he, in reference to such doubted things, determine what all should do, or not do, by particular rules, concerning every such case that was then depending, which it seems he reckoned was not necessary; or that might afterwards fall out, which was little to be expected. But he lays down one general rule against judging one another, which he presses with that authority, and such awful reasons, as might make a Christian heart tremble to be guilty of it.

And in reference to the mentioned differences among ourselves, (as well as others no nearer to the substantials and vitals of our religion) there is somewhat else to be done than to con-

clude against a man's sincerity because of such differing sentiments and practices, and which certainly would be done, if truly Christian love, or even justice itself, did take place as they ought. It would be considered what these several differing parties have to say for themselves, what reasons they may allege, and whether, though they be not sufficient to justify their several opinions and practices, (as all cannot be in the right) they be not such as by which a conscientious man, a sincere fearer of God, may be saved, so as to take the way which he is found in by the ducture of an upright (though misguided) conscience, and not as being under the government of depraved vicious inclination. As those that can, and do, yield the conformity that is required of ministers, though perhaps they wish some things altered, why may it not be supposed they sincerely think, (though it should be mistakingly) that the things more liable to exception are capable of a sense wherein they are not unlawful; and not being so, they think themselves bound to take the opportunity which they this way obtain, of doing good to the souls of men? Others also apprehending it lawful, how possible is it to them from a certain reverence they have for antiquity, and for our own first reformers, to think it best and fittest to be continued! Nor is it unsupposable that many of the laity may upon the same grounds have the same apprehensions.

Again, divers in the ministry, judging the terms unlawful upon which only they can have liberty for the public exercise of it, is it not possible they may, with a sincere conscience, think themselves not therefore obliged wholly to renounce their calling and office, to which they were duly set apart, and had by their own solemn vow given up themselves; but to do so much of the work of it as they can have opportunity for? And whereas of the people, some may think the public forms and ways of worship not simply unlawful, but find them less edifying to them than other means which the providence of God affords them, and therefore do more ordinarily attend those, though sometimes also the other;—why should it be thought on the one hand, or the other, that it is so little possible they should be guided by reasonable and conscientious considerations herein, that nothing but corrupt inclination must be understood to govern them? Is it not supposable, that accounting the public worship substantially agreeable to divine institution, though in some accidentals too disagreeable, they may think there is more to incline them at some times to attend it, than totally to disown it? For what worship is there on earth that is in all things incorrupt? And they may apprehend it fit to testify their union with the sincere Christians that may be statedly under that form, and especially in a time when the contest is so high in the world,

between them that profess the substance of reformed Christianity, and them that have so much deformed it; and may conceive it becoming them, at some times to express their own unconfinedness to a party, and to use that liberty which, they think, should not be judged by another man's conscience, which yet they would have regard to, where there are not greater reasons to preponderate. They are indeed under a disadvantage, (with them that are apt to use a greater liberty in their censures, than they do in their practice in these matters) when it falls out that their partial compliance is the means of their security from penalties; and their disadvantage is greater, whose judgment to this purpose hath not been formerly declared and made known. But they for shame ought to be silent whose total compliance gains them not only immunity but great emoluments: and that perhaps yielded, not according to a former, but (at that time when the opportunity occurred) a new and altered judgment. They may, however, know themselves to be moved by greater ends than secular interest; and so may these we now speak of, and yet may think the preservation of their earthly portion, wherewith they are to glorify God in this world, not too little an end to be designed and endeavoured by lawful means. It were a very uncouth and sinful thing to do a spiritual action for a carnal end; but if the thing sincerely and supremely designed be the glory of God, that is the most spiritual end: if it be not, that ought to be changed which is wrong, not that which is right: the unlawful end, not the lawful action, if it be lawful. If it be not, their good end will not justify their action, but it will their sincerity; which is all that this discourse intends.

And then for such as decline the public worship totally, as judging it simply unlawful; is it not possible they may be led to that practice by somewhat else than humour and factious inclination? Have they not that to say, which may at least seem solid and strong to a conscientious man? How jealous God did heretofore show himself in all the affairs of his worship! How particular in the appointment, even of the smallest things, he would have appertain to it! How unsuitable multiplied ceremonies are to the mature state of the church! And how sensibly burdensome they were to the disciples of the first age, as a yoke not to be borne; and that therefore God himself, when the season of maturity, and the fulness of time came, thought fit to abrogate those of his own former appointment, with no (probable) design to allow men the liberty of substituting others in their room. Why is it not to be thought, that the fear of the great God withholds them from doing what they judge would offend him; and that, if they err, it is for fear of erring? Why can nothing be thought on whereto to impute their practice, but peevish humour? Especially if that be con-

sidered, (which is common to these two last-mentioned sorts of men) that they sensibly find other means more edifying to them, or expect them only to be so, if the other be thought unlawful. If they be thought merely lawful, and such as may therefore be used upon weighty reasons at some times, but are found less edifying, who can doubt but I ought to use for my soul (at least in an ordinary course) the aptest means that I can ordinarily have for the promoting its edification and salvation? Do we not reckon ourselves to owe so much even to our bodies? And what is another man's opinion to signify against my sense and constant experience? Is there not such a thing as a mental *idiosyncrasy* (or peculiarity of temper) as well as a bodily? and whereto what is most agreeable, any man that is not destitute of ordinary understanding is the fittest judge himself; as every one that is not a mere fool, is so much a physician as to know what diet suits him best.

And if it be said against the former of these two sorts, Are they not at all times obliged to use the means which are most edifying? They may say, At all times when they have nothing to outweigh their own present edification. But it is not impossible that a conscientious judgment may esteem all the forementioned considerations concurring, to be of more weight than the greater advantage hoped to be gained in that one hour. Nor need any man be ashamed professedly to avow that which may seem the least of them, the saving of himself from temporal ruin. For he is to be accountable to God for what portion he hath entrusted him with of the good things of this life, and is not to throw it away without sufficient cause. Who sees not that more is allowed, and ordinarily done without scruple or censure, upon the like account? As to omit the hearing of a sermon, if at that time one's house be on fire, yea, or if it be to save my neighbour's, or the plucking of an ox or sheep out of a ditch on the Lord's day, when I might have been employed at that time in the solemn worship of God to my spiritual advantage. A mere commutation unto less advantage, upon an equally or more urgent necessity, is less than omission. And they that shall have learned, as our Saviour directs, "What that means, I will have mercy and not sacrifice," will not condemn the guiltless.

Only, such are concerned, first to search well and be satisfied concerning the lawfulness of their action in itself, that they do it not with a self-condemning conscience, nor with a groundlessly self-justifying one: and then especially to see to it that their end be right; God's interest, not their own, otherwise than in a due, entire subordination to his. We can never act innocently or comfortably in any thing, till he be in every thing more absolutely our all in all; and have much more reason to be scrupulous,

and (if others knew our hearts) were much more liable to censure, that, in our common affairs, he is so much forgotten; that we live not more entirely to him; which we little animadvert upon, and are very officious to cast motes out of our brother's eye, when this beam is in our own.

The design of mentióning these hints of reasons for so different judgments and practices, is not to show which are strongest, and ought to prevail; which cannot be the business of so short a discourse as this, and so much of another nature; but to show, that while there is any thing colourable to be alleged for this or that way, true Christian love, compassion of common human frailty, and a duly humble sense of a man's own, would oblige him to think, that conscience towards God may have a greater hand (though, with some, misguided itself) in guiding men the different ways they take, than is commonly thought: and to consider, though such and such reasons seem not weighty to me, they may to some others, who are as much afraid of sinning against God as I; and perhaps their understandings as good in other matters as mine. It would be considered how really difficult the controversy is about the ceremonies, and some other parts of conformity. Perhaps few metaphysical questions are disputed with more subtilty than that controversy is managed with, by Archbishop Whitgift, Bishop Morton, Doctor Burgesse, Doctor Ames, Cartwright, Calverwood, and others. And how very easily possible and pardonable is it to unlearned persons, or of weaker intellectuals, being obliged in order to their practice to give a judgment in reference to these things one way or other, to judge amiss! Why should we expect every sincerely pious man to be able to hit the very point of truth and right, in matters that belong, as Bishop Davenant once said in another case, *non ad fidem fundamentalem, sed ad peritiam theologicam, et fortasse ne ad hanc quidem, sed aliquando ad curiositatem theologorum,* "not to the foundation of our faith, but to the skill of divines, and perhaps not to this neither, but sometimes only to their curiosity." What were to be done in reference to so nicely disputable things, made part of the terms of Christian communion, is more the matter of our wish than hope, till by a gracious influence God better men's minds, or by a more deeply felt necessity bring us to understand what is to be done. Our case is ill when only *vexatio dat intellectum,* when "nothing but sorrow and suffering will make us wise," which is very likely from the righteous hand of God to be our common lot.

In the meantime, it is hard to think that he cannot be a sincerely pious man, whose understanding is not capable of so difficult things, as to make a certainly right judgment about them. *In absoluto et facili stat æternitas.* And why should not the com-

munion of persons going into a blessed eternity have the same measure.

And besides the different size and capacity of men's understandings, and consequently of their conscientious determinations, There are also as *differing relishes* of these things, which Christian love would oblige a man to consider with equanimity, so as thereupon to refrain hard censures. All good men have not the same relish of the various forms and modes of dispensing the truths and ordinances of Christ. Some of our suffering brethren in Queen Mary's days are said to have found great spiritual refreshing by the Common Prayer. And, in our own days, some may profess to have their hearts warmed, their affections raised and elevated by it. They are no rule to us; but it would less become us, hereupon, to suspect their sincerity than our own. Others, again, cannot relish such modes of worship, when in the ministry of such as use them not they find a very sensible delight and savour.

And this, by the way, shows the great difference between such things as have their evidence and goodness from God himself, and those that borrow their recommendableness only from human device. All good men, in all the times and ages of the Christian church, have a constant value and love for the great substantials of religion, which have in them that inward evidence and excellency as command and captivate a rectified mind and heart; whereas the mere external forms of it, the outward dress and garb, are variously esteemed and despised, liked and disliked by the same sort of men, *i.e.* by very sincere lovers of God, not only in divers times and ages, but even in the same time. How different hath the esteem been of the liturgic forms with them who bear the same mind, full of reverence and love towards religion itself; as that habit is thought decent at one time, which in another is despicably ridiculous; whereas a person in himself comely and graceful, is always accounted so, by all, and at all times.

Now this various gust and relish cannot but have influence, more remotely, upon the conscientious determination of our choice, concerning our usual way of worshipping God. For how should I edify by what is disgustful to me? Though it be true, that our spiritual edification lies more in the informing of our judgments, and confirming our resolutions, than in the gusts and relishes of affection, yet who sees not that these are of great use even to the other; and that it is necessary that at least there be not a disgust or antipathy? What is constantly less grateful, will certainly be less nutritive. That is usually necessary to nourishment; though, alone, it be not sufficient, as it is in the matter of bodily repasts. Who can, without great prejudice, be

bound to eat always of a food that he disrelishes? though he may without much inconvenience, for a valuable reason, do it at some time.

And they that think all this alleged difference is but fancy, show they understand little of human nature, and less of religion: though they may have that in themselves too which they do not so distinctly reflect upon, even that peculiar gust and relish, which they make so little account of. For, have they not as great a disgust of the others' way, as they have of theirs? Would they not as much regret to be tied to theirs? Have they not as great a liking of their own? And doth not common experience show that there are as different mental relishes as bodily? How comes one man in the matters of literature to savour metaphysics, another mathematics, another history, and the like? and no man's genius can be forced in these things. Why may there not be the like difference in the matters of religion? And I would fain know what that religion is worth that is without a gust and savour, that is insipid and unpleasant, much more that would, being used in a constant course, this or that way, be nauseous and offensive?

If, indeed, men nauseate that which is necessary for them, the gospel, for instance, or religion itself, that is certainly such a distemper, as, if the grace of God overcome it not, will be mortal to them; and we are not to think of relieving them, by withdrawing the offending object, which itself must be the means of their cure. But is there any parity between the substance of religion, which is of God's appointing, and the superadded modes of it, that are of our own?

Upon the whole, nothing is more agreeable, either to this divine principle of love, nothing (within our compass) more conducible to our end, the ceasing of our differences, (which are most likely to die and vanish by neglect,) or their ceasing to be inconvenient to us, than to bear calm and placid minds towards one another under them; to banish all hard thoughts because of them. If I can contribute no way else to union, from this holy dictate and law of the spirit of love, I can at least abstain from censuring my fellow Christians. It is the easiest thing in the world one would think *not to do*, especially not to do a thing of itself ungrateful to a well-tempered mind; and a great privilege not to be obliged to judge another man's conscience and practice, when it is so easy to misjudge and do wrong: most of all when the matter wherein I presume to sit in judgment upon another is of so high a nature, as the posture of his heart Godward: a matter peculiarly belonging to another tribunal, of divine cognizance, and which we all confess to be only known to God himself. And if I would take upon me to conclude a man insincere, and a hypo-

crite, only because he is not of my mind in these smaller things that are controverted among us, how would I form my argument? No one can, with sincerity, differ from that man whose understanding is so good and clear, as to apprehend all things with absolute certainty, just as they are: and then go on to assume, (and a strange assuming it must be,) But my understanding is so good and clear as, &c. It is hard to say whether the uncharitableness of the one assertion, or the arrogance of the other, is greater; and whether both be more immoral or absurd. But the impiety is worst of all; for how insolently doth such a man take upon him to make a new gospel, and other terms of salvation than God hath made! When his sentiments and determinations of things which God hath never made necessary, must be the measure and rule of life and death to men, how is the throne and judicial power of the Redeemer usurped which he hath founded in his blood! "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth." Rom. xiv. 4, "Yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand." *v.* 9, "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." *v.* 10, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." *v.* 11, "For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." One would think they that lay no restraint upon themselves in this matter of judging their brethren, upon every light occasion, reckon this chapter came by chance into the Bible: and that our Lord spake himself, at random, words that had no meaning, when he said, (Matt. vii. 1,) "Judge not, that ye be not judged," &c. What man that fears God would not dread to be the framer of a new gospel, and of new terms of salvation? It is a great solace, indeed, to a sincere mind, but implies a severe rebuke, in the meantime, to such a self-assuming, censorious spirit, that it may in such a case be so truly said, It is a much easier thing to please God than man.

They that find this measure will have the better of it, if they can abstain from retaliating, whenas the reason of it is the same on both sides. For they may say, You are to remember I differ no more from you in this matter, than you do from me, and if I judge not you about it, what greater reason have you to judge me? And they have little reason to value such a man's judgment concerning their duty in a doubtful matter, who cannot see his own in so plain a case. The matter for which they judge me may be very doubtful, but nothing can be plainer than that they ought not so to judge.

(9.) A due Christian love would oblige us, after competent

endeavours of mutual satisfaction about the matters wherein we differ, to forbear further urging of one another concerning them. Which urging may be two ways; either by application to our affections, or to our reason and judgment.

Some, perhaps, find it more suitable to their own temper, and measure of understanding and conscience, to go the former way; and only vehemently persuade to do the thing, wherein the other shall comply with them, and in some sort justify the course which they have taken, without regard to the other's conscience; press them right or wrong to fall in with them; sometimes labouring to work upon their kindness, by flattery, sometimes upon their fear, by threats and menaces. Sincere love would certainly abhor to do thus. Would it let me violate another's conscience any way? The love I bear to a fellow Christian, if it be true, having for its measure that wherewith I love myself, would no more let me do it than hurt the apple of mine own eye. An inspirited, waking conscience is as tender a thing, and capable of a worse sort of hurt. If some have more latitude than I, and think what they may do, in present circumstances, so far as they may they must, would it not be the dictate of love patiently to admit it, especially when it comes to suffering? For let me put my own soul in his soul's stead, and would I be willing to suffer upon another man's conscience, and not upon my own; and forfeit the consolations which in a suffering condition belong to them who for conscience towards God endure grief? Would I, if I loved them, be content they had the grief, and did want the consolation? There will be still found, in a state of suffering, somewhat that will prove a common cause to good men, wherein they will most entirely agree, whatsoever smaller things they may differ in. As the pious Bishops Ridley and Hooper well agreed upon a martyrdom at the stake, in the same important cause, who before had differed (somewhat angrily) about some ceremonies. Concerning which difference how pathetical is the letter* of the former of these to the other, when both were prisoners (the one at Oxford, the other at London) on the same account. "But now, my dear brother, (saith he) forasmuch as we thoroughly agree and wholly consent together in those things which are the grounds and substantial points of our religion; against the which the world so furiously rageth in these our days, howsoever, in time past, by certain by-matters and circumstances of religion, your wisdom, and my simplicity (I grant) have a little jarred; each of us following the abundance of his own sense and judgment: now, I say, be you assured, that even with my whole heart, God is my witness, in the bowels of Christ, I love you in the truth, and for the truth's sake, which abideth

* Fox, Martyr.

in us, and as I am persuaded shall, by the grace of God, abide in us for evermore."

Again, if others have less latitude; it would be far from us to add to the affliction they are liable to, upon that very account, by a vexatious urging and importuning them: especially to do it with insulting threats and menaces, and labour to overawe their brethren, against their consciences, into the embracing of their sentiments and way. Is it possible a Christian should not understand how necessary it is to every one's duty and peace that he exactly follow that direction of the apostle's, and esteem it most sacred, (Rom. xiv. 5,) "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind;" and that we firmly resolve never to do any thing with regret or a misgiving heart, at least? Not against a prevailing doubt, for in very doubtful cases to be rid of all *formido oppositi*, or suspicion that the matter may be otherwise, is, perhaps, impossible to me; but to do any thing against the preponderating inclination of my judgment and conscience, were great wickedness, and such as, if it were known, would make me unfit for any communion whatsoever. And I do here appeal to you who most severely blame any of us for our dissent from you, whether, if we should thus declare to you, "That it is truly against our consciences to communicate with you upon your terms, we believe we should greatly offend God in it, and draw upon us his displeasure; but yet to please you, and prevent our temporal inconvenience, or ruin, we will do it:" I appeal to you, I say, whether we should not hereby make ourselves uncapable of any Christian communion with you or any others? This is then the plain state of the case, and you do even put these words into our mouths: "If we follow the dictate of our consciences, we must decline you; if we go against it, you must decline us, supposing we declare it; if we declare it not, we have nothing to qualify us for your communion but hypocrisy and dissimulation! and what do you gain by such an accession to the church? you have gained, in any such case, not half the man, the outside, the carcass only, or the shadow of the man, *i. e.* when you have debauched our consciences, when you have spoiled us, and made us worth nothing, then we are yours, wherein you show nothing of love, either to us, or to yourselves!"

Others again that are, themselves, men of more reason and conscience, take the somewhat more manly and Christian course; and bend themselves by argument to convince the reason, and satisfy the consciences of such as differ from them. But herein also there may be an excess, that is unprofitable and grievous to those they would work upon by this course; and from which, therefore, Christian love, studying the peace and quiet of their brethren, would restrain them. I say from the ungrateful excess

of such an endeavour, for I would fain know, can there not herein be an excess? Is it not supposable that they who differ from me, in such lesser things, may be sometime arrived to a settlement and fixedness of judgment in them, as well as I? Is it not possible they have weighed the moments of things as much as I have done? Is such a cause infinite? Is it not possible that all may have been said in it which is to be said, and the matter have been sifted to the very bran? So that all my further arguings may serve but to argue my vain self-confidence, or aboundingness in my own sense, as if all wisdom were to die with me. Or what if they serve at length, but to show the incapacity of the subject to be wrought upon, and the different complexion of his mind I am treating with? All cannot receive all things: we cannot make our sentiments enter with every one. Perhaps they show the weakness of his understanding, and then, hath that direction of the apostle no authority with us? "Him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations." Rom. xiv. 1. He whom we account our weaker brother, and of slower understanding, must be received, (not cast out of communion) and because God himself hath received him, as *v.* 3. (*q. d.* Is he thought fit for God's communion, notwithstanding his unsatisfied scruple, and is he unfit for yours?) and he is not to be vexed and importuned with continual disputation, if that apostolical precept be of any value with us. Sometime at least, we should think, we have tried in such a case as far as is fit, and driven the nail as far as it will go. Is it not possible such a matter may be agitated beyond the value of it, and that more time and pains may be spent upon it than it is worth? The obscurity and perplexity of the controversy shows the less necessity. Things most necessary are most plain. Must we always, in matters of confessedly little moment, be inculcating the same thing, rolling endlessly the returning stone, and obtruding our offensive crambe? Perhaps, as no good is done, we do much hurt. When is the saw of disputation long drawn, about one thing, without ill effects? Reason having at length spent its strength grows (as weak people are) peevish and froward; degenerates into anger and clamour. In greater differences than our present ones, between the Protestant churches abroad, some of more prudent and peaceable minds have earnestly pressed the laying aside of disputes, and putting a period by consent to their theological wars. *Solitarum disputationum labyrinthos ne ingredi quidem conentur*, said a great divine* in his days, in reference to those controversies that he would have had composed by an amicable brotherly conference. And that king of Navarre, who, at that time, seemed highly concerned for the peace and welfare of the reformed churches, (afterwards Henry

* Davenant, Sent. ad Dureum.

the Fourth of France) in his negotiations with divers princes to that purpose, gave special instructions to his ambassador much to insist upon this, *Ut acerbis illis contentionibus, quibus, et verbis, rixati sunt inter se theologi, et scriptis: et ejusmodi disputationibus silentio tandem finis imponatur, ut Christiana charitas, et animorum fraterna conjunctio revocetur.* (*Mandat. Hen. Reg. Naver. Jacobo Siguriæ Legato suo, &c. apud Goldastum,*) "that till other remedies could be used, an end might be put to bitter contentions and disputations, that Christian love and a brotherly union might be restored." And who sees not how much this would conduce to peace and union in our case too? Who sees it not, that is a hearty lover of peace; and that is not intent upon continuing and keeping afoot a controversy, not so much as a means to that, but as an end; contending for contention's sake, and as a thing which he loves and delights in for itself? I am sure love to our brethren would not let us continually molest and importune them to no purpose. And it is fit they that urge to us, these are little things which they importune us about, should know we have great things to mind, of eternal concernment to us: and that we cannot be always at leisure to mind little things, beyond the proportion of our little time on earth, and the little value of the things themselves.

(10.) Sincere love restored and exercised more among us, would certainly make us forbear reviling, and exposing one another, and the industrious seeking one another's ruin. For such as can allow themselves to do any thing that hath this tendency, not to preserve public order, but to gratify their private ill-will; not in a sudden heat and passion, but deliberately, and so as to pursue a formed design to this purpose: if such men were capable of being reasoned with, (though it were to as good purpose to talk to a storm, or reason with a whirlwind, or a flame of fire) I would ask them, "What, are you altogether unatonable? Will nothing divert you from this pursuit? if any thing, what will? What more gentle thing than our destruction do you seek, or will content you? Is it our communion? And do you so recommend yourselves? Do you not know Cain is said to have been "of that wicked one who slew his brother?" (1 John iii. 12;) and that "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him?" Is it not said, (John viii. 44,) "that such are of their father the devil, and the lusts of their father they will do, who was a murderer from the beginning?" And in the fore-mentioned, (1 John iii. 10,) "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother?" If all were like you, under what notion were we to unite with them? The apostle tells us, (1 Cor. x. 20, 21,) "I would not that ye

should have fellowship with devils; ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." And in good earnest, incarnate devils (though that text do not directly speak of such) have too much of devil in them, to be participants in a communion, that can seem desirable, or is likely to be grateful, to serious Christians. I must avow it to all the world, it is not this or that external form I so much consider in the matter of Christian union and communion, as what spirit reigns in them with whom I would associate myself. How can I endure to approach those holy mysteries, wherein all are to drink into one spirit, and declare their union with the God of love, with the Immanuel, God most nearly approaching us, God with us, collecting and gathering us in unto him as our common centre, whence the blessed spirit of holy love is to diffuse itself through the whole body, all enlivened by that spirit, and formed by it unto all kindness, benignity, goodness, and sweetness? With what significancy can I do so, (though I were never so well satisfied with the external forms and modes myself) if it be apparent (I say, if apparent) I must cast in my lot and join myself with them, (were they generally such) whose souls are under the dominion of the quite contrary spirit, that fills them with malignity, with mischievous dispositions and purposes, towards many a sincere lover of God that cannot be satisfied with those forms and modes, and who decline them only from a sense of duty to God, and a fear of offending against the high authority of their blessed, glorious Redeemer?

I know many are apt to justify themselves in their animosity, and bitterness of spirit towards others, upon a pretence that they bear the same disaffected mind towards them. But besides that it is the most manifest and indefensible injustice, if they charge the innocent, or such as they are not sure are guilty, if their own wrath and enmity be so potent in them as to enable their tainted, vicious imagination to create its object, or so to disguise and falsely clothe it, as to render it such to themselves, as whereupon they may more plausibly pour out their fury:—I say, besides that, how contrary is this vindictive spirit to the rules and spirit of the Christian religion! Is this to "love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, and despitefully use us?" &c. How unlike the example of our blessed Lord when, even in dying agonies, he breathed forth these words and his soul almost at once, "Father, forgive them," &c.: or of the holy martyr Stephen, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" How unlike is that aptness to the retaliating of injuries, to the Christian temper which the renowned Calvin discovers in an epistle to Bullenger, speaking of Luther's severity towards him:

"If Luther a thousand times (saith he) call me devil, I will acknowledge him for a famous servant of God;" which passage both Bishop Moreton and Bishop Davenant magnify him for, and the former saith, he herein spake so calmly, so placidly, so indulgently, as if it were not a man, but humanity itself that uttered the words.

Yea, and such retaliation is what paganism itself hath declaimed against. (*Maxim. Tyr. Dissert.* 2.) A noted philosopher urges that against it, that, one would think, should not need to be suggested to Christians; somewhat so prudential as might not only work upon the principle of love to others, but even that of self-love, that then the evil must perpetually circulate, and so must again and again return upon ourselves. As indeed if that must be the measure, to revile them that revile us, (1 Pet. ii. 23, iii. 9,) and render evil for evil, railing for railing, we should never have done. It were a course which, once begun, could, by that rule, never find an end.

This then is the first part of the answer to the proposed question: What may be most hopefully done, &c. The endeavour of having our hearts knit together in love would surely do much towards it. And this is agreeable to any the most private capacity. No man can pretend his sphere is too narrow (if his soul be not) for the exercise of love towards fellow Christians. And I hope it is agreeable to all our principles. Sure no man will say it is against his conscience to love his brother. And the same must be said of,—

Secondly. That other expedient, the endeavour to have our souls possessed with a more clear, efficacious, practical faith of the gospel, which was to make the other part of the answer to our question. And though this is the more important part, it is also so very evident, that we do not need to make this discourse swell to a bulk too unproportionable to the rest it is to be joined with, by speaking largely to it.

Although we have not the name of faith in this text, we have the thing. It is not named, but it is described, so as that it may easily be understood, both what it is, and how necessary to our purpose.

1. What it is, or what measure and degree of it, that would be of so great use in such a case. We are told, with great emphasis, "The riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." Such as whereby,—

(1.) Our understandings are duly enlightened so as mentally to entertain aright the doctrine of the gospel, *i. e.* first distinctly to apprehend the meaning and design of this mysterious revelation of God in Christ; and secondly to be fully assured of the truth of it.

(2.) Such, again, as whereby our hearts are overcome, so as practically and vitally to receive it, *i. e.* to acknowledge, receive, resign, entrust, and subject ourselves unto God in Christ, revealed in it.

(3.) And of how vast importance is this towards our establishment, the confirming, fortifying and uniting of our hearts, and our joint preservation in our Christian state, (the main thing we are to design, and be solicitous for,) we may see in these particulars.

[1.] Hereby we should apprehend the things to be truly great wherein we are to unite. That union is not like to be firm and lasting, the centre whereof is a trifle. It must be somewhat that is of itself apt to attract, and hold our hearts strongly to it. To attempt with excessive earnestness a union in external formalities that have not a value and goodness in themselves, when the labour and difficulty is so great, and the advantage so little, how hopeless and insignificant would it be! The mystery of God, even of the Father, and of Christ, how potently and constantly attractive would it be, if aright understood and acknowledged! Here, we should understand, is our life and our all.

[2.] Hereby we should, in comparison, apprehend all things else to be little: and so our differences about little things would languish and vanish. We should not only know, but consider and feelingly apprehend, that we agree in far greater things than we differ in; and thence be more strongly inclined to hold together, by the things wherein we agree, than to contend with one another about the things wherein we differ.

[3.] Hereby our religion would revive, and become a vital, powerful thing; and consequently more grateful to God, and awful to men.

First. More grateful to God, who is not pleased with the stench of carcasses, or with the dead shows of religion instead of the living substance. We should hereupon not be deserted of the divine presence, which we cannot but reckon will retire, when we entertain him but with insipid formalities. What became of the Christian interest in the world, when Christians had so sensibly diverted from minding the great things of religion to little, minute circumstances, about which they affected to busy themselves, or to the pursuit of worldly advantages and delight?

Secondly. More awful to men. They who are tempted to despise the faint, languid appearances of an impotent, inefficacious, spiritless religion, discern a majesty in that which is visibly living, powerful, and productive of suitable fruits. Who that shall consider the state of the Christian church, and the gradual declining of religion for that three hundred years from

Constantine's time to that of Phocas, but shall see cause at once to lament the sin and folly of men, and adore the righteous severity of God? For as Christians grew gradually to be loose, wanton, sensual, and their leaders contentious, luxurious, covetous, proud, ambitious affecters of domination, so was the Christian church gradually forsaken of the divine presence. Inasmuch as that at the same time when Boniface obtained from Phocas the title of Universal Bishop, in defiance of the severe sentence of his predecessor Gregory the Great, sprang up the dreadful delusion of Mahomet: (*Brerewood's Enquiries:*) and so spread itself to this day, through Asia, Africa, and too considerable a part of Europe, that where Christians were twenty or thirty to one, there was now scarce one Christian to twenty or thirty Mahometans or grosser pagans. And what between the Mahometan infatuation, and the popish tyranny, good Lord! what is Christendom become! when by the one, the very name is lost, and by the other, little else left but the name?

[4.] Hereby we shall be enabled most resolvedly to suffer, being called to it, when it is for the great things of the gospel, the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, clearly and with assurance understood and acknowledged. Such a faith will not be without its pleasant relishes. It is an uncomfortable thing to suffer either for the mere spiritless, uncertain, unoperative notions and opinions, or for the unenlivened outward forms of religion, that we never felt to do us good, in which we never tasted sweetness, or felt power, that we were really nothing ever the better for. But who will hesitate at suffering for so great things as the substantials of the gospel, which he hath clearly understood, whereof he is fully assured, and which he hath practically acknowledged and embraced, so as to feel the energy and power of them, and relish their delicious sweetness in his soul! And though by such suffering he himself perish from off this earth, his religion lives, is spread the more in the present age and propagated to after ages; so seminal and fruitful a thing is the blood of martyrs, as hath always been observed. And as such a faith of the mystery of the gospel appears to have this tendency to the best, firmest, and most lasting union among Christians, and the consequent preservation of the Christian interest, this mystery being more generally considered only; so this tendency of it would be more distinctly seen, if we should consider the more eminent and remarkable parts of it; the mystery of the Redeemer's person, the Immanuel, God uniting himself with the nature of man; his office, as reconciler of God and man to each other; his death, as a propitiatory sacrifice to slay all enmity; his victory and conquest over it, wherein is founded his universal empire over

all; his triumphant entrance into heaven, whither he is to collect all that ever loved, trusted, and obeyed him, to dwell and be conversant together in his eternal love and praises. How directly do all these tend to endear and bind the hearts and souls of Christians to God, and him and one another in everlasting bonds!

Thus, then, we have the answer to our question in the two parts of the text: the former pointing out to us the subjects of our union, with the uniting principle by which they are to be combined with one another: the other the centre of it, with the uniting principle whereby they are all to be united in that centre.

Use. And what now remains but that we lament the decay of these two principles, and to our uttermost, endeavour the revival of them?

1. We have great cause to lament their decay; for how visible is it! and how destructive to the common truly Christian interest! It was once the usual cognizance of those of this holy profession, "See how these Christians love one another, and even refuse not to die for each other!" Now it may be, "How do they hate! and are like to die and perish by the hands of one another!" Our Lord himself gave it them to be their distinguishing character. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." Good Lord! what are they now to be known by!

And what a cloudy, wavering, uncertain, lank, spiritless thing is the faith of Christians in this age become! How little are the ascertaining grounds of it understood, or endeavoured to be understood! Most content themselves to profess it only as the religion of their country, and which was delivered to them by their forefathers; and so are Christians, but upon the same terms, as other nations are Mahometans or more gross pagans, as a worthy writer some time since took notice.* How few make it their business to see things with their own eyes, to believe, and be sure that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God! How far are we from the riches of the full assurance of understanding! How little practical, and governing, is the faith of the most! How little doth it import of an acknowledgment of the mystery of God, *viz.* of the Father, and of Christ! How little effectual is it! which it can be but in proportion to the grounds upon which it rests. When the gospel is received, not as the word of man, but of God, it works effectually in them that so believe it. 1 Thess. ii. 13.

2. Let us endeavour the revival of these principles. This is that in reference whereto we need no human laws. We need not edicts of princes to be our warrant for this practice, of loving

* Pinke's Trial of a Christian's love to Christ.

one another, and cleaving with a more grounded, lively faith to God and his Christ. Here is no place for scruple of conscience in this matter. And as to this mutual love; what if others will not do their parts to make it so? What! shall we only love them that love us, and be fair to them that are fair to us, salute them that salute us? "Do not even the publicans the same?" What then do we more than others? as was the just expostulation of our Saviour upon this supposition. Matt. v. 47.

And let us endeavour the more thorough deep radication of our faith, that it may be more lively and fruitful; which this apostle you see (not forgetting his scope and aim) further presses in the following verses, testifying his joy for what he understood there was of it among these Christians. "Though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ." *v.* 5. And exhorting them to pursue the same course, "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." *v.* 6, 7.

And what, also, must we suspend the exercise and improvement of our faith in the great mysteries of the gospel, till all others will agree upon the same thing? Let us do our own part, so as we may be able to say, "*Per me non stetit*, 'it was not my fault,' but Christians had been combined and entirely one with each other, but they had been more thoroughly Christian, and more entirely united with God in Christ; that Christianity had been a more lively, powerful, awful, amiable thing. If the Christian community moulder, decay, be enfeebled, broken, dispirited, ruined in great part, this ruin shall not rest under my hand." We shall have abundant consolation in our own souls, if we can acquit ourselves as to these two things—that we lamented the decay and loss, and endeavoured the restitution of them; and therein as much as in us was, of the Christian interest.

DELIVERANCE FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS.

A SERMON,

PREACHED ON THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER, 1703.

READER,

THIS discourse was preached without any the least thought of its being made more public; and a considerable time passed afterwards, without any such intention. I thought it, indeed, too uncomposed to appear in the world; but in a matter of no worse consequence, I make no difficulty of acknowledging that I at length chose rather to follow the judgment of the many hearers that moved for this further publication, than my own. Therefore, amidst much other business, and great infirmities that are sufficiently monitory to me to be unconcerned for the gratifying of curiosity, in myself, or in any others, I so far revised it, as very imperfect memorials would enable me. If any where it be somewhat enlarged, that can be no prejudice to them that heard it; and much less to them that heard it not.

That it may be of some use to direct our thanksgivings (and supplications also) so as, without the neglect of lower and subservient mercies, they may have principal respect to blessings of the highest value, is the serious desire and prayer of an earnest and well willer to the true prosperity of the Christian church,

J. H.

A SERMON.

Col. i. 13.

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

You already know that the occasion of our assembling together this day is twofold; to commemorate some former national mercies, and deliverances from certain very considerable efforts of that power of darkness, which is peculiar to the devil's kingdom: and also, to prepare for the commemoration, at the approaching season, of the much more general mercy of our common redemption, in the observation of a solemn rite belonging to the kingdom of Christ.* The two parts of this text give us an apt and suitable ground for each of these: for giving God thanks for great former mercies; and preparation for that designed holy solemnity.

We begin, for the former of these purposes, with the first part of the text, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness." And that we may see how accommodate this will be to the former mentioned purpose, (as comprehended within the import of this clause, and but comprehended, it being of much greater latitude) some things I must previously note to you. As,

1. That there is a kingdom manifestly implied in these words, "The power of darkness," unto which the kingdom of God's dear Son is opposite.

2. That this kingdom can be no other than the devil's kingdom, whom our Lord himself doth own to have a kingdom. "If Satan be divided against himself, how then can his kingdom stand?" Matt. xii. 26. These are our Lord's own words, and joined, in that context, with what sufficiently intimates that kingdom to be directly opposite to his own.

3. That the distinguishing characters of these two opposite kingdoms, the kingdom of the devil, and the kingdom of God's

* It being our usual monthly season of preparation for the Lord's supper.

dear Son, are darkness, and light; the one is a kingdom of darkness, and the other is a kingdom of light. The devils are called the rulers of the former, so stigmatized, (Eph. vi. 12,) principalities, and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world. Our Lord's is implied to be a kingdom of light, in the words immediately foregoing: "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness," &c. It is a kingdom they are to inherit, Matt. xxv. 34. In its most perfect state it comprehends brightest light, purity, and glory; as the opposite kingdom, consummate, is utter darkness. And so are the beginnings and first principles of each. "Ye were darkness, now are light in the Lord." Eph. v. 8. Both are seen, in the unconverted, and converted state; to turn them from darkness to light, and (which shows that darkness to be Satanical) from the power of Satan, unto God, (Acts xxvi. 18;) as what their inheritance is hereupon to be, the next words show, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified. And yet again,—

4. That the darkness which characterizes the devil's kingdom, includes those things that are directly opposite unto those included in the light which characterizes the kingdom of Christ. The light that characterizes the kingdom of Christ includes these two things, truth and holiness.

These are the principal things comprehended in the notion of light, as it is characteristical of the kingdom of the Son of God. The light of truth, objectively revealed, and subjectively received, the frame of Christian doctrine, with the knowledge, and belief thereof; and the light of holiness, so shining in the lives of Christians, that men may see their good works, Matt. v. 16. Accordingly the darkness, that doth characterize the devil's kingdom, doth comprehend in it falsehood and wickedness.

It comprehends in it all manner of falsehood, truth obscured and perverted, ignorance, error, deceit, blindness of heart, (Eph. iv. 18,) a wilful overlooking of the great and most necessary truths, which the souls of men are, above all other, concerned to take in, and admit into their inward parts. And it comprehends wickedness in the whole compass of it; wickedness against God, all manner of impiety, idolatry, blasphemy, neglect and profanation of the ordinances and institutions wherein he claims to be worshipped, in the proper seasons thereof: wickedness against men, all comprehended and summed up in their hatred of one another. He that hateth his brother, is in darkness, even diabolical; for they who emerge, and are recovered out of it, are said to have overcome the wicked one. 1 John ii. 11, 13. And both these sorts of wickedness are

put together, (Rom. xiii. 12, 13,) "Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." And those works of darkness are said to be "chambering, wantonness, rioting, drunkenness, strife and envying." And, (Eph. v. 11,) we are warned to have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Which works are (*v.* 3, 4,) said to be fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, (which is also said to be idolatry) filthiness, foolish talking, &c., as things that bar us from any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, or of God. And Christians are therefore forbidden to be partakers therein, (*v.* 7,) because they are light, and children of light, (*v.* 8;) and, (as it is 1 Thess. v. 5,) of the day, not of the night, nor of darkness. They are of the opposite kingdom, and must walk conformably thereto. Our way being thus far plain, we go on to add,—

5. That the power which the devil exerts and exercises in this darkness, is twofold;—first, spiritual and internal: secondly, secular and external.

There is a *spiritual* power which he exercises in this darkness, acting more immediately upon the minds and spirits of men. The god of this world "blinds their minds, who believe not." 2 Cor. iv. 4. And, he is said to be "the spirit that works in the children of disobedience." Ephes. ii. 2. And the impenitent, such as have not hitherto repented and turned to God, it is said, "He leads them captive at his will." 2 Tim. ii. 26. And—

There is a *secular* power which he also exerts, in the midst of that darkness that he hath brought upon this world, relating, as far as he can obtain leave, to the bodies of men, and their external concernments and affairs; and not only of particular persons, but of nations and kingdoms, especially where he observes any design to be more directly formed against his kingdom and interest in this world; he thereupon comes to be engaged in a more open and explicit opposition. And so when he is the author of this or that bodily or outward affliction, to a particular person, as he can obtain divine permission; this is an effort of his power, in the midst of that darkness. Such as are rescued out of his kingdom, his design is to vex, because he cannot destroy them whom he cannot mortally touch; *viz.* such as are born of God, and have a new nature by that divine birth, "the wicked one touches them not," (1 John v. 18,) *i.e.* not mortally, to make them sin unto death, as *v.* 16. But if he can, however, have leave to touch them in their bodies, or external concernments, he will rather do that than nothing; ruin them he cannot, but he will afflict them as he can. Therefore is he said to go about "like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;" which is there meant, immediately, in reference to their external concernments, as will appear if you observe the context, 1 Pet. v. 8.

For it follows, in the 9th verse, "Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." It is true, being uncertain of the event, he hath a further aim to overthrow their faith, and by his roaring to fright them out of their religion; therefore it is said, "Whom resist stedfast in the faith,"—defeat his final design. But as the means to his end, when he roars like a lion against any of the servants of Christ, it is with design to bring them into the most afflicted condition he can; that so he may, at least, make them signify the less in that state of opposition wherein they are engaged against him in the world. So you find the imprisonment of Christ's servants imputed to Satan, Rev. ii. 10. "The devil shall cast some of you into prison, and you shall have tribulation for ten days," which some understand of the ten persecutions. Whatever the devil meant, God intended their trial, as it is there said, and the demonstration of the victorious power of the divine principle, their faith, and his Spirit in them, "that being tried, it might be found unto praise and glory." 1 Pet. i. 7. And we cannot but doubt he let Job come on the stage, as his champion to combat Satan, who was the prime author of his manifold calamities; his accuser first, and his persecutor afterwards. He accuseth him of want of integrity, "Doth Job serve God for nought?" (*ch.* i. 9;) and at the same time complains of his own want of power to come at him: "Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" *v.* 10. Whereupon, for the trial of Job's fidelity and patience, God puts all he had into the devil's power, his person only excepted, which as yet he must not touch:—manifest, therefore it is, the devil animated the Sabeans and Chaldeans to take away his oxen, and asses, and to slay his servants with the edge of the sword, (*v.* 14, 15, 18;) kindled the fire in the lower heavens, that burnt up his sheep and servants, (*v.* 16;) raised the storm from the wilderness, that smote the four corners of the house, where his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking, and buried them in its ruins. *v.* 18. And we are expressly told it was the devil, upon his enlarged licence, that smote him with those venomous boils. *ch.* ii. 7. It was the devil that bound that daughter of Abraham eighteen years. Luke xiii. 16. It was the devil that brought upon the Christian church the famed ten persecutions, under the pagan Roman empire, understood to be meant by the great red dragon. Rev. xii. 3. Whence also he wears that very name, (*v.* 9,) "The great red dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil and Satan."—These are some of those efforts, amidst that darkness wherein the devil hath and uses so great power. But yet further,—

6. It is manifestly a far greater deliverance to be freed from

his spiritual power, and the horrid effects thereof, than from that which he may use in reference to our outward concernments.

Therefore, now, upon these mentioned considerations, on this former part of the text, that we may apply it suitably to our present purpose, these two things are to be asserted and evinced. —That to be delivered from the devil's power, in external respects, is a real and great deliverance: But that—To be delivered from his power in spiritual respects, is a much greater deliverance.

(1.) That to be delivered from the devil's power, in external respects, either personal or national, is a real, and very great deliverance. We are to look upon that deliverance, which this day we more particularly commemorate, now almost a hundred years ago, as a defeated plot of the devil. It carries that manifest aspect with it to every eye, a contrivance formed, and designed to be executed, by the subtlety and power of the prince of the darkness of this world. I need not repeat the narrative of it, being sufficiently known to you, or may be read in our histories; but nothing can be plainer than that here was a design and plot of hell and devils, contrived in the dark, and so to have been executed, till the execution itself should have brought it to light. For what darkness, but that of hell, could have so much fire in it, so much of destructive rage and fury? And though there was hazard in the undertaking to the instrumental actors, what did the devil care what became of them? If his main design succeeded, he had been a great gainer, and glutted his ravenous appetite; if it succeeded not, but turned upon the heads of the undertakers, he had been no loser, but only less a gainer, having some prey, however, to feed but not satiate a devouring appetite, which must be eternally insatiable. And what can be more devil-like?

And what was the deliverance by which God did again signalize this very day fifteen years ago, but a repetition of the same mercy? The same in substance, though different in circumstance. It was from the same enemy, the same invisible, and the same visible enemy, that we were preserved then, and more lately since. And what is our continued peace and quiet hitherto, but the same mercy continued under the care and conduct of our present sovereign? It is preservation from the same enemy, and from the powers of the same darkness, that we continue hitherto to enjoy. And this mercy is not only real, but great, both in itself great, and great in respect of what it encloses and subserves. *In itself*, for it is preservation from a great enemy, the greatest in all the world; a daring one, that feared not to contend perpetually with the Almighty, and without hope of self-advantage; who loves mischief, therefore, for mischief's sake, and working with mighty power, and power that

works in such darkness as to us mortals is impenetrable. And great, in respect of *what it encloses*, and is subservient unto; for it encloses the precious gospel of our Lord, yet continued unto us, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the gracious communications we partake in, by and through them; and is subservient to their true and proper design. And therefore mercy of that kind ought to be looked upon as real, and very great, which way so ever you consider it. We should therefore take heed of being guilty of so vile ingratitude, as not to commemorate, with a suitable impression upon our spirits, this sort of mercies, which were the foundation of the mercies we have in so long a course enjoyed; for former mercies are fundamental to later ones. The expression is very emphatical, and worthy our most serious regard, which we have, (Ps. lxxxix. 2,) "For I have said, mercy shall be built up for ever." And how is mercy said to be built up, but as former mercies are fundamental to later ones? Thus are the present mercies, that we enjoy this day, founded upon the mercies of former days, such as we ought joyfully and thankfully to recount with delight and praise; remembering the years of the right hand of the Most High. But yet,—

(2.) I must also note to you, that however we are to esteem mercies of that kind, *viz.* deliverances from the external power of the prince of darkness, real, and very great mercies; we are yet to account deliverance from the spiritual power, exerted in that darkness, much greater. I hope all your minds and hearts will close with me in this, as soon as you hear it, it carrying its own light and evidence in itself. For if you do but compare the cases of them, who have been all along the authors of those great calamities and miseries to the inhabitants of this lower world, and especially to the church of Christ in it, with theirs that have been the sufferers upon the most peculiar account; you cannot but say, the portion and lot of the sufferers is most unspeakably rather to be chosen. We know who have been the authors of those great calamities in the world, and in the church of God in it, for many ages by-past; the same who were to have been the authors of our intended destruction. And in taking a view of their case, let us consider both their character, and their doom; both which you may find set down together, in one place, *viz.* 2 Thess. ii. 10—12.

[1.] Their character, which really is enough to fright any man that is but master of his own reason, to see how and in what way they have abandoned and lost theirs; to behold men so stigmatized, as indeed they have marked out themselves: they whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power; here is the devil's power at work in them, the horrid cause of their stupendous dementation. The effects do follow, and by them, in signs and lying wonders, among all which wonders

the greatest wonder is themselves; that the thing called man in them should be so metamorphosed, and transformed into so brutal and diabolical a monster! so destitute of understanding, so full of malignity, (as we shall further see, by and by) and all deceivableness of unrighteousness. So far their character is continued, and it partly further follows, interwoven with some part of their present doom; as also their final doom is both interserted, and distinctly expressed. Therefore take into their character, their being under strong delusion, the energy of deceit, as the Greek signifies, to believe a lie; spoken indefinitely, to note that any, the most absurd figment they can be imposed upon to believe: (that God sends them as belonging to their doom, we shall consider afterwards.) And we might enlarge their character, by taking in from *v.* 3, that they are apostates, such as were fallen away from a state of excellency; and spoken of as one person, from their oneness in spirit and design, as a man of sin, a son of perdition, (capable of the active as well as passive sense) and *v.* 4, who opposes, "exalteth himself above all that is called God, sits in his temple, is worshipped as God;" and *v.* 8, the wicked or lawless one. This is their character that are, and have been, through many centuries of years, the authors of the miseries and calamities the church of God hath suffered, and partly doth suffer, and is endangered by at this day. In this their character, I shall take notice of two things.

Of the great infatuation that is upon their minds.—Of the monstrous degeneracy, not from Christianity only, but even from humanity too, that is to be found in the temper of their spirits.

First. The great infatuation that is upon their minds. It appears that they are under strong delusions, potent, efficacious ones, they are most effectually deluded. And of this I could give many instances, but shall content myself only with the mention of two.

The first is, That great fundamental wild conceit which they have laid at the bottom of their whole enchanted fabric, by which one would wonder how they could hope to impose on any part of the rational world, or could be imposed upon themselves; that all the power they claim, and use, to the disturbance of mankind, and oppression of the Christian church, they pretend to have by deputation from our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and by succession from the holy apostle Peter. By deputation from Christ, as if they were his deputies, in doing such monstrous work as this! As if Christ had deputed them to destroy Christianity, to render it a ridiculous thing, by their inserted fooleries; and odious, by their barbarous cruelties! That He, who was the light of the world, should appoint them to overspread it with darkness! That He, who so freely shed his blood to redeem

it, had commissioned them so copiously to shed human and Christian blood; to make even his church, the temple of the living God, a shambles and slaughter-house, and affright the rest of mankind from coming near it; who yet could be as little safe in declining it, if they were within the reach of their arm! What fearful havoc did they make unprovoked in America, as soon as they could get any footing there; destroying multitudes of (towards them) harmless, innocent creatures, and who (as strangers) received them with all possible kindness, even to the number of no less than forty millions; as hath been acknowledged by some of their own historians.* Their kings and princes were put to death, with most exquisite torture, upon the unjustifiable pretence of their being infidels; but with design to make them confess their gold and treasure, which they did but suspect they concealed. By these inhuman cruelties they laid waste whole fruitful countries, and turned well-peopled lands into mere deserts. And what other tendency could this have, than to engage the nations of the earth against Christians, and Christianity itself, as a thing by no means to be endured in the world? And were such multitudes destroyed by Christ's direction, and to propagate the Christian faith? And what commotions, wars, and bloodshed did they introduce into that large country of Habassia, disturbing that quiet and peaceful empire, though Christian, only because it would not be Roman!† And have we not reason to add, that many horrid tragedies acted by them, more within our near notice, in the several parts of Europe, and in this kingdom particularly? And that all this should be pretended to be done by a power derived from Christ! in so open and contemptuous opposition to the laws, and spirit of Christ; the design of his coming into this world; and the very genius and natural tendency of Christianity itself! The things themselves are full of black horror. But that they should be said to be done in that name, speaks the most monstrous impudence and infatuation! As if Christ had changed names with the devil, and laying aside that of a Saviour, had chosen to be called Abaddon, or Apollyon, the common destroyer of mankind: and having changed his mind, and his very nature, did now set himself to counteract and defeat the design for which he came into the world!

And that they have this power, by succession from St. Peter, is as idle and absurd a pretence. If he were their predecessor, they were sure very unsuitable successors. Did he ever go before them in such work? What precepts, what footsteps of his have they followed? Did he ever claim a power to annul, at his own pleasure, the laws and ordinances of his Master and

* D. Barth. de. l. Casas, B. of Chiap.

† Of which see Lasdolphus, and at large, D. Geddes' Ethiop. Histor.

Lord? to amass treasures, to accumulate dignities, acquire ample revenues, to dispose of crowns and sceptres, and, as he should think fit, to dethrone, or unthrone the princes and potentates of this earth?

If he had such power, what is that to them? How came they by it from him? Was it because he was bishop of Rome, that therefore the assumed, usurped name, without the apostolical office, and the (inseparable) Spirit, and spiritual power, acts, and design, could create them such? As well might the habit make a monk, or a beard a philosopher; by their fruits and works they are to be known. Our Lord reckoned himself sufficiently to have refuted their vain pretence, who gloried in being Abraham's successors, by telling them, "So did not Abraham." John viii. 40. But all their learning, wit, and sophistry will never answer what hath been written,* to make it highly probable that St. Peter was never at Rome, much less sat twenty-five years there. It must therefore be a strong delusion, must make them build so mighty a fabric upon so infirm and weak a foundation.

The second thing I shall instance in, is their worshipping a piece of bread as a deity. What a strange infatuation is that, that one cannot distinguish a piece of bread from a God, or an object of worship! And to believe this against the most irrefragable reason, and common sense, and without any pretence from Scripture, more plausible than it would be to say, the sun in the firmament is a god; or that a buckler, which one turns with his hand this way or that, and wherewith men defend themselves in battle, is a deity or an object of worship; because God is said, in Scripture, to be a sun and a shield: with a thousand like instances that might be given.

Secondly. But we are to consider also, as we proposed, and as belonging to the character of these men, the monstrous degeneracy not from Christianity only; but also, from common humanity itself, that appears in the temper of their spirits. This depends upon the former, which could not be spoken of, without some excursion into this; but they are distinct things, and therefore the latter requires to be distinctly, but briefly touched upon. And this depravedness of their spirits is that which is unspeakably more horrid (if any thing can be thought to be more so) that men, and who profess themselves Christians, could impose it upon themselves to be so barbarously bloody and cruel to every one that is not so stupidly foolish in these things as themselves, that they would destroy all the rest of mankind, if it were in their power, for not agreeing with them in the same sentiments; though, to agree with them, I must

* In the Modest Enquiry, upon that subject; a work, that though anonymous, the author needed not be ashamed of: besides what hath been said by divers others.

disagree with myself, and with all other men that have yet their reason, and their senses left them, and the faith of Christians, in other points most essential to religion. If I will not believe that they are deputed by Christ as the successors of St. Peter, to do what they please in secular governments, and religion; if I will not believe a piece of bread ought to be worshipped as a God; I am to be tortured to death, for this my disbelief! which is so horrid a transformation of a human creature, as no power of thought can frame an idea of any thing more monstrous throughout the world! *viz.* a Christian, because he is so, must be made the common butcher of mankind; to destroy as many human lives as he can reach! For if this treatment be for this reason deserved, it ought to take place to our utmost every where. Whence also is to be collected that men might, had they not been Christians, have been sociable, kind, friendly, and have lived quietly, and pleasantly with one another! So that Christian religion is the transforming principle, and obliges men to be the destroyers of their brethren, as much as in them lies; and with exquisite torment, that of burning alive, such as common humanity would abhor to use towards a beast. And besides, the tortures of their inquisition must be thought a thousand times worse than burning for an hour or two! And let now this matter be impartially considered, doth it not already appear, that the authors of such miseries and calamities to the rest of men, and the rest of Christians, especially such as are sincere, are in much worse case than the poor sufferers? We cannot but judge so, on the following accounts:—

Here is, first, a transformation of minds. The minds of men, of reasonable creatures, are transformed into the most horrid things; *i. e.* they are turned, excepting the mere human shape, (and every one that understands what belongs to the human essence, easily apprehends how little mere external shape doth, to the making of a man) they are turned into ravenous, wild beasts, into lions, tigers bears, wolves, destroying and tearing in pieces whatever comes in their way! And do but consider, were it not a much more eligible thing to have the nature of man, the understanding of man, common humanity remaining, though the external shape were altered; than to have the shape of a man remaining, but to be in the temper of one's mind a tiger, a bear ravaging and destroying wheresoever one goes? Such are set up as portents, prodigies, and as monitory signs, both to astonish mankind, that the impression may be deeper and more permanent; and thereupon to warn them seasonably to repress the beginning of any such disposition, fearing whither it may grow; and therefore to consider, with dread, how fearful a thing it is that there should be such a sort of creatures, in human shape, as can take delight in tormenting them that never

did or wished them harm; as with pleasure can torture others, for no further cause but merely because they take the same liberty of thought, which as a common right themselves assume; and cannot be of their opinion, against common sense, and the common reason of mankind, and without pretence any way. If a man were to express his sense as to this matter, in a solemn prayer to the Almighty, would he not say; Lord, let me rather be the most monstrous, deformed creature, in external shape, that ever was produced in this world; only let me have in me a right, nor give me up to a reprobate, mind! And what can we conceive more essential to man, than these two things, reason, and love; and both these are abandoned and lost, in those men whose character hath been given. Their reason and love do, at least, suffer the highest violation both together. They believe themselves, and would have all others believe, against the common reason and sense of men; and are become haters of mankind, otherwise than as they shall fall in with their absurd sentiments, and will be subservient to their cursed designs.

We shall, secondly, be easily induced to look upon the author's case, as much the less eligible than the sufferer's, upon this further account; that this horrid degeneracy and depravedness of spirit is most entirely voluntary, and proceeds from their plenary consent with the devil, as an inactuating spirit in them. Such is the import of those tremendous words (that would make one shrug to think of them)—that "spirit that inworketh (or hath energy) in the children of disobedience." Eph. ii. 2. Their perfect voluntariness appears in their most complacential self-approbation, under so direful a transforming change, from man into part brute, part devil. Others feel in themselves some disaffections, and distempers of spirit, which they deplore, lament, and contend against. These men glory in their own shame, and what ought to make them a hissing, * and reproach to the nations of the earth, they applaud them for. They declare their sin, as Sodom, justify the prodigious deformities of their own spirits, write volumes to defend them, and put on a countenance unaccustomed to blushing; as if in good earnest they expected other men should think their cause to be good! And to what a stupendous height doth this raise the horror of their case!

But hence also it is that the devil hath that access to the inward parts, into the more secret receptacles and chambers of their souls; unto which he could have none, if their consenting will did not open him the door. Not that there is any formal bargain, or contract between him and them, for his power, you find, works in darkness; but he and they agree upon the

* ——Populus mihi sibilat.

same things, so doth the devil lead them captive at his will. 2 Tim. ii. 26. The sufferers, in the meantime, are only such; and as they endure evils, in themselves incomparably less, they do but endure them; not being active to procure them, otherwise than by being and doing what they ought. And so they have, in their suffering, that great matter of relief and rejoicing, the testimony of their conscience, (2 Cor. i. 12,) besides the expectation of a glorious reward; while, for the authors of their sufferings is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. Jude 13. Which leads to the consideration of—

[2.] Their doom (for hitherto we had chiefly considered but their character); and this is partly present, partly final.

Present. That, for this cause, God sends them strong delusions, (2 Thess. ii. 11,) not by active infusion of malignity, whereof, on God's part, there was no possibility, nor on their part any need. They have enough of their own, besides the addition of what that text notes, that their coming is after the working of Satan with all power. These are a sort of men abandoned of God, delivered over to Satan, under whose conduct they have put themselves. A fearful case! They are, not by divine commission, but permission only, left in his hands; and now, "the lusts of their father they will do." John viii. 44.

Final. "That they all might be damned"—a severe sentence! but justified by what went before,—because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; but struck off from the Christian religion what should make it amiable and self-recommending, and (by what follows) that they took pleasure in unrighteousness; hence they are left of God, in order to their future damnation. Not that God made any men on purpose to damn them; but when they had contracted such guilt, by sinning against the clearest light, against the law of their own nature, and against the law of Christ; they are damned, as having marked themselves out for hell and the society of devils, whose associates and subjects they were before. And if it be said, of them who do evil that good may come, "their damnation is just," much more of them that love mischief for mischief's sake. And who would not now choose the tortures of a flaming fire, for an hour or two, rather than be turned into hell, to endure infernal flames for ever?

And we may add, (to show how much greater this spiritual deliverance is, than deliverance from the external powers of darkness) that the fearful tragedies that these men act, being by the so manifest and immediate power of the devil, he is therefore most highly gratified, by having his will so far of them. Nothing could be more grateful to him, than to have made them his tools, his instruments, to fill the world and the

Christian church with such miseries and calamities, as they are the voluntary authors of; and hereupon they will be the subjects of his triumph and scorn at last. And here, if you would but pause a little and consider, "What would I not rather choose, than to be the subject of the scorn and insultation of devils?" this is the case of this very generation of men. How will the devils insult over them! "See what fools I have made of so great a part of mankind! How ready have they been to serve me, and my most horrid designs! There is nothing that I would have them believe, be it never so absurd, but I could make them believe it; there is nothing so horrid to act, but if I bid them, they are ready to act it!" And how much the greater will the matter of their insultation be, that such could be found even in the Christian world, that should be made to serve his vile and horrid purposes, and so render Christianity hateful to mankind! How hath the extent and growth of it, by this means, been hindered! And it can never spread, till it have another kind of representation than is given by this sort of men. And consider that, in opposition to what was last mentioned, from the spiritual power of the devil, which he acts in this darkness, all the sincere are truly, and shall be fully delivered; whereas from his external power they are many times not delivered. It is not ascertained to them that they shall not be impoverished, that they shall not be cast into prison, that they shall not be put to death; but it is certain that Satan is dethroned in their souls, and that God will bruise him under their feet shortly, and they shall have opportunity and ground for eternal triumph over all his power and malice. Therefore, upon all these accounts, this must be far the more eligible deliverance; though deliverance, in the former kind, is by no means to be made light of. They that are sincere, are sure at last of a most glorious victory over the devil. They shall overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his testimony; not having loved their lives unto the death. And that is certainly the most desirable course and state, that hath the most desirable and valuable end.

And according hereto should the temper of our spirits be, in reference to such deliverance from the power of darkness, which we have occasion to make mention of this day. We ought to remember, with great gratitude, our preservation from those efforts of this power, wherein it is exercised with reference to the external secular concernments of particular persons, and of nations, more especially our own. We have reason to bless God for that deliverance that hath been wrought out for us in that kind; and that it hath been so often repeated, and so long continued. We ought to take much to heart the mercies of God herein. And although we are here met under somewhat a

distinct character, to bear a part in the solemn thanksgivings of the day; we are not the less obliged to be very serious herein: and, however, have for our part great reason not to expect any thing hard or grievous from such, differing from us, as understand religion; between whom and us, there is an agreement in all the substantials thereof. We have the same articles of doctrine, the same institutions of worship, and the same rules of life, conversation, and practice towards our sovereign, and fellow-subjects. And when there is so great an agreement, that which is left to be the matter of disagreement, can be only very little circumstantial things; and which they from whom we differ professedly call indifferent, not tending therefore, in themselves, to make either better men, or better Christians. And whereas some of us do not think so throughout, that disagreement is, we hope, the rather to be pardoned, both because it is little, so little that there are few men of considering minds that, upon strict inquiry and comparing of thoughts, will not be found to differ in much greater things; and very consistently with most entire mutual love, or at least no design of hurt to each other. And yet the difference is real, and not to be dissembled, nor thrown off at pleasure; it being in no man's power, that would keep a conscience void of offence towards God and man, to form his judgments in this way, or that, as he will.

And whereas there are churches abroad, and at home, wherewith we agree, and from which we differ, in these smaller things; we are not willing quite to disjoin ourselves from either sort, in which the substance is visible of our common religion; for they are in their nature and kind, one and the same. Nor can we apprehend how a church, or a society formed for the purposes of religion, can be constituted, and distinguished for sole communion with that, and no other, by such things as are confessed, on all hands, to be no parts of religion; nor to have any necessary connection with it. The more truly catholic the communion of Christians is, it is the more truly Christian. There is a mental communion, which is more intimate than merely local; which yet we cannot have with them with whom we judge it unlawful to have actual, local communion, if there be occasion. But one may have both, wheresoever the essentials of Christianity do appear not subverted by the addition of other things, that are inconsistent with any of those essentials: as the case is with them, whose black character hath been given in this discourse.

But though we are not to expect hard things from friends, we are to remember the same common enemy, to them and us, is still in being, and hath great power in the world; and that prince of darkness that animates them, is still powerful, and as full of mischief as ever. And we know not what advantages

our too common iniquities may, from the justice of a righteous God, give the common enemy against us; whereupon we have no reason to be secure. If things, therefore, should be brought to that state, that Smithfield fires should be kindled again, so as that we shall not be delivered from that sort of the powers of darkness; let us labour to get into that good state, as to be able to bless God, even in the midst of flames, that we are delivered from the worst sort of the powers of darkness; that the prince of this world is dethroned in our souls, that he is judged there. And let us labour to have that temper of mind, towards such as may be the authors of those sufferings to us, that our love towards them may not be extinguished. Labour that every one of us may say from our hearts, "Let them discover what hatred they will towards me, God forbid that I should not exercise true love towards them. If they curse me, I will bless them; if they despitefully use me, and persecute me, I will pray for them."

But we have also the second part of the text to be briefly reflected upon. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Our present limits allow us not to enlarge upon this part. And it cannot but be thought reasonable, that this occasion being monthly, and often considered, the other but annual, and rarely returning, we should choose to insist more largely upon it. But how great a privilege is this translation; and how amazing that it should be represented to us by so endearing an expression! "Because my Son is dear to me, I will take you into his kingdom. He is not so dear to me, but I can be very well contented to make you partakers of all the blessings that his kingdom carries in it."

And you know that there is no kingdom but what hath its particular laws, and statutes, and ordinances, and privileges belonging to it. There is one great ordinance belonging to this kingdom of our Lord's, that we are solemnly to attend the next Lord's day. If we look upon ourselves as not only delivered from the power of darkness, but translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, this is indeed a great privilege; but there is no such privilege which hath not its duty belonging to it. We ought to consider how we shall carry the matter upon this translation, being translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; and being to partake in the privileges that belong to his kingdom, how shall we deport ourselves suitably hereto, with what temper of spirit:—

1. With an admiring temper of spirit, considering the state out of which we are delivered. He hath "delivered us from the power of darkness; he hath turned us from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." This is that I am sent

for, saith the apostle Paul, as a gospel minister, (Acts xxvi. 18,) "to open your eyes, and turn you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Then into what a transport should it put us, to think that we should have been under the power of the devil unto this very day, the power of the prince of the air, that works in the children of disobedience, that works energetically, as the word signifies,—his work in them hath an energy in it. Ephes. ii. 2. O frightful thought! to have such a horrid fiend lying continually in my bosom, preying upon the very vitals of my soul, leading me captive at his will! What the devil would have me be, and do, that I was, and did most readily!

2. We should recount, with great thanksgiving, our admission into this kingdom. Think we, first, whence we are delivered; and then into what state we are admitted—into the kingdom of his dear Son. Into what an adoring, thankful frame should that put us, that our blessed God should translate us into his own Son's kingdom! You shall hereupon be so provided and cared for, as none else in the world are besides. He will watch over your spirits; your souls shall be bound up in the bundle of life; you shall have all the supports and comforts too, that, in infinite wisdom and love, he shall judge necessary for you, in this world; and at length be brought into the presence of the divine glory, with exceeding great joy!

3. Consider that the particular ordinances of this kingdom of his, are aptly designed for your advantage. This that we are now to prepare for, is an ordinance belonging to that kingdom; "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, (saith our Lord, Luke xxii. 29, 30,) that you may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom." We are to eat and drink with him, in his kingdom; and that ordinance, wherein we are to eat and drink with him, is the emblem of what is there finally designed and meant, when we are to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.

4. We should consider what faith is required, on our part, being come into such a kingdom, and having the privileges thereof secured unto us, by such a sealing ordinance. There ought to be no dubious thought of him, who so kindly invites us; especially when we are, in so friendly a way, eating and drinking together.

5. It is to be considered what fidelity is required of us. We are to swear fealty to the King of this kingdom; never let it be said, we that eat and drink at his table, have lift up our heel against him.

6. With what joy should we consider our state, in our approach to such an ordinance; we are received as friends to the

King's table. "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him, let the children of Zion rejoice in their King." Ps. cxlix. 2. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, thy King cometh, meek and lowly." Zech. ix. 9. How infinitely condescending, when he treats such as we for his welcome guests!

And take both the parts of the text together, and they will give us this twofold hint of use.

1. Consider how solicitous we ought to be, till we know that we are got out of that dark and horrid kingdom, and brought into this kingdom of light and grace. When we know that these two kingdoms divide the world, and how fearful a thing it is to belong to the former, and how desirable a thing to belong to the latter kingdom; who would not be solicitous, till he knows that he is got out of that horrid kingdom, into this blissful one, and into so safe and happy a state? And how stupid negligence is it not to know, or be concerned, to what kingdom I belong! Dost thou not know who is thy king? Whether the dear Son of God, or that accursed king? I hope you will labour not long to be ignorant in a matter of so great concern, but drive it to a speedy issue.

2. With reference to both these, if you have a comfortable ground to hope that you are delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, be serious in your thanksgivings, and endeavour to arrive at greater degrees of gratitude, that your hearts may be more warm, and raised in your thanksgivings. And such thanksgivings ought to be gratefully expressed, in acts of mercy to the poor and needy. Blessed are the merciful, for they have received mercy, and shall receive it.

THE RIGHT USE

OF THAT

ARGUMENT IN PRAYER,

FROM THE

NAME OF GOD;

ON BEHALF OF A PEOPLE THAT PROFESS IT.

THE PREFACE.

No sort of men have ever pretended to religion, who have not allowed unto prayer a very eminent place in it. And so much a deeper and more potent principle is religion in the nature of man than reason, (though both are miserably perverted and enfeebled) that the former doth secretly prompt men (especially in great distresses) to pray, and expect relief by prayer, when the way wherein it is efficacious cannot so well be explicated or apprehended by the other.

And as prayer hath ever been reckoned a very principal part of religion, so hath intercession for others been wont to be accounted a very fit and proper part of prayer.

In the general, prayer is most evidently a duty of natural religion, a dictate of nature, which every man's own mind suggests to him, or may be appealed to about it: (should not a people seek unto their God?) Whence that personated, eloquent patron of the Christian cause, urging, for the conviction of his heathen adversary, the common practice of people in their extremities, to lift up (even untaught) their hands and eyes to heaven, fitly says of it,* *Vulgi iste naturalis est sermo*, "that they do herein, as it were, but speak the language of nature."

Now, hereupon, the impression of that primitive law of nature, (not quite worn out from the mind of man, even in this his very degenerate state) "to love our neighbours as ourselves," doth, as a natural instinct, secretly prompt us to pray for others, whom we cannot otherwise help, (especially such to whom we have more peculiar obligations, who are in a more especial sense our neighbours) as (at least in our last necessities) we do for ourselves.

In which recourse to God, whether for ourselves or others, we

* Octav. apud Min. F.

are led, by a sense of our own impotency and dependent state, from a deeply inward apprehension of a Deity, that is, (as Epicurus himself seems constrained to acknowledge concerning the idea of God) even proleptical, or such as prevents reason. So that we do not, being urged by the pinching necessity of the case, stay to deliberate and debate the matter with ourselves, how this course should bring relief; do but even take it for granted, that it may; by an apprehension that is earlier in us than any former reasoning about it, and being prior to it, is also not suppressed by it, but prevails against it, if there be any thing in reason objected, which we cannot so clearly answer.

Yet, when we do bring the matter to a rational discussion, we find that in our conception of God we have the apprehension of so perfect and excellent a nature, that we cannot suppose he should be moved by any thing foreign to himself, or that we can inform him of any thing he knew not before, or incline him to any thing to which his own nature inclines him not: and, therefore, that though the wise and apt course of his government over intelligent creatures requires that they should be apprehensive of their own concernments, (whether personal, or that belong to them as they are in communities) and pay a solemn homage to his sovereign power and goodness by supplicating him about them, yet that if he hear their prayers, it must not be for their sakes, but his own. Therefore, also, it cannot, upon strictest reasoning, but seem most dutiful to him and hopeful for ourselves, that our prayers should be conceived after such a tenor as may be most agreeable unto that apprehension.

The Holy Scriptures and the Divine Spirit do both aim at the recovery of apostate man, and the repairing the decays of his degenerate nature, and do, therefore, (besides what was necessary to be added) renew the dictates of the law of nature, the one more expressly representing them, the other impressing them afresh, and re-implanting them in the hearts of all that are born of God. Therefore, that external revelation of the mind and will of God doth direct, and his blessed Spirit (which is pleased to be in all his children the Spirit of grace and supplication) doth inwardly prompt them, not only to pray (in reference to their single and common concernments), but to form their prayers after this tenor; which is to be seen in their so frequent use of this argument in prayer, from the name of God.

Whereupon, in a time when we are so much concerned to be very instant in prayer, not only each of us for himself, but for the body of a people upon whom that holy name is called; I reckoned it seasonable to show briefly the import and right use of this argument; and to that purpose have taken for the ground, the following text of Scripture.

PRAYER FROM THE NAME OF GOD.

JER. xiv. 21.

Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake.

WHERE we have a petition, and the argument enforcing it.

I. A very serious petition, or a deprecation of the most fearful evil imaginable. "Do not abhor us." The word doth not merely signify abhorrence, but disdain?* a displeasure prevailing to that degree, and so fixed, as to infer rejection, even from a just sense of honour. So some of the versions read, reject us not, or cast us not forth, as we would do what (or whom) we despise and scorn to own;† as if it were feared the holy God might count it ignominious, and a reproach to him, to be further related to such a people, and might even be ashamed to be called their God. And consequently that the following argument is used not without some suspense of mind and doubt lest it should be turned against them, whereof more hereafter. Here it is implied,—

First, To be no impossible thing that God should reject with abhorrence a people once his own, or that have been in peculiar *visible* relation to him. Prayer is conversant about matters of divine liberty, *i.e.* that are not known to us to be already determined this way or that; but that may be, or may not be, as he pleases and sees fit consistently with the settled course and order of things; not about things that he had before made ordinarily necessary, nor about things that are simply or in ordinary course impossible. In the former case prayer would be needless, in the latter to no purpose. We do not pray that the sun may rise to-morrow at the usual hour, or that the sea may ebb and flow, nor that they may be prevented doing so. But we must distinguish such necessity and impossibility from a mere certainty that things shall either be, or not be. We are to pray, in the present case, with a deep apprehension that this is perfectly a matter of liberty with the great God, and that as he

* מאס Sprevit, contempsit. † Vulg. Lat. and Chald. Par.

took such a people to be his, of mere good pleasure, (Deut. vii. 7; x. 15,) so it depends wholly upon his mere pleasure that he continues the relation, when he might abandon and cast them off. It is further implied,—

Secondly, That the more serious and apprehensive among such a people, do understand it (at some times more especially) a thing very highly deserved, that God should abhor and reject them. The deprecation is a tacit acknowledgment that the deprecated severity was reasonably to be feared, not only from sovereign power, but offended justice. This is indeed expressed in the next foregoing words: "We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers; for we have sinned against thee: do not abhor us," &c. So that this ought to be the sense of the supplicants in the present case, that they are herein perfectly at mercy; that if they be heard, it is undeserved compassion, if they be rejected, it is from most deserved displeasure. And if it were not expressed, yet the supplication must be understood to imply it. For when the great God hath vouchsafed to limit his sovereign power, and antecedent liberty, by his promise and covenant, such a prayer were itself reflecting, and an affront, if it should proceed upon a supposition, or but intimate, that he should ever be inclined to do such a thing without an excepted cause; such as that his rejecting them upon it, might consist with his being faithful to his word: when he values himself so much upon his faithfulness, and seems even to lay his very Godhead upon it: as those strangely emphatical words import, (Deut. vii. 9,) "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations;" implying that he would even yield himself not to be God, if he did not in all points vindicate and demonstrate his faithfulness. Nor, indeed, do we properly crave for any thing, but we therein disclaim a legal right to it, and acknowledge it to be rightfully in his power, to whom we apply ourselves, to grant or deny:—we make demands from justice, and are supplicants for mercy. And with this sense the spirits of holy men have abounded, when they have taken upon them to intercede in the like case, as we see, Dan. ix. 7, "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day," &c. And to the same purpose, Ezra ix. Nehem ix. at large, and in many other places; *q. d.* "Our only resort, O Lord, is to thy mercy; thou mightest most justly abhor and abandon us, and say to us, Loammi, ye are none of my people; but, in the multitude of thy tender compassions and mercies, do it not." It is again further to be collected,—

Thirdly, That this is a thing which holy and good men do most vehemently dread and deprecate, *viz.* that God should

thus abhor and reject a people so related to him. It is that which the very genius and spirit of holiness, in the sincere, regrets beyond all things for themselves. They have taken the Lord to be their God for ever and ever; their hearts have been attempered to the tenor and constitution of an everlasting covenant, which they entered with no design or thought of ever parting; but that it should be the ground of an eternal relation. And the law of love written in their hearts, prompts them to desire the same thing for others too; especially such to whom they have more especial, endearing obligations; and (if it were possible) that the whole body of a people to whom they are themselves united, might all be united to God upon the same terms, even by the same vital and everlasting union: and therefore also, that the same divine and soul-enlarging love, being a living principle in them, makes them have a most afflicting sense of any discerned tendencies to a rupture and separation, that might prevent, and cut off the hope of his drawing still more and more of them into that inward living union, and intercourse with himself. These things it may suffice briefly to have noted from *the petition* in the next. That which I principally designed, is what we have next coming under our view, *viz.*—

II. The argument brought to enforce it; "for thy name's sake." About which, what I shall observe, shall be with special reference to the case which the prophet refers unto, in his present use of it; *viz.* that in praying for a people professing the name of God, that he would not reject and cast them off, the fit and proper argument to be insisted on is that from his own name. See *v.* 1, 9. And here it will be requisite,—to have some very brief consideration of this argument in the general: though—we principally intend to treat of it, as it respects this present case.

First. In the general, we are to consider both what the name of God in itself imports, and what is signified by using it as an argument in prayer. And,—

1. As to what is imported by the name of God, in itself considered. We shall not trouble this discourse with the fancies of the rabbins; of whom yet one very noted, soberly and plainly tells us the name of God is wont to signify his essence and truth, though the instance he gives shows he means it of the *Nomen Tetragrammaton*, (the name Jehovah) which indeed more eminently doth so.* To our purpose it is obvious and sufficient to note, that by his name, more generally, is signified both the peculiar excellencies of his nature and being, which are himself, as the use of a man's name is to notify the man; so when he is pleased himself to proclaim his own name, thus it

* Maimon. Mo. Nevoch.

runs; "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin," &c. (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7:) and again, that by his name is meant his glory, and most especially the honour, and reputation of his government. For so, too, a man's name signifies his name and repute in the world; as they whom our translation calls "men of renown," (Gen. vi. 4,) the Hebrew text says only, (but plainly meaning the same thing,) they were men of name. And if he be a public person, a prince, and ruler over others, it must more peculiarly signify his reputation and fame as such. Thus Moses, designing to celebrate the unexceptionable equity and awful majesty of the divine government, begins thus: "Because I will publish the name of the Lord, ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are judgment." Deut. xxxii. 3, 4.

2. As an argument used in prayer, it may accordingly either signify the principle from which it is hoped and requested he should do what we desire, or the end for which. For as his name signifies his nature, which himself hath taught us primarily to conceive under the notion of goodness, mercy, love, in that forementioned (Exod. xxxiv. 7, and 1 John iv. 16,) so when we pray he would do this or that for his name's sake, the meaning may be, that we request he would do it for his mercy's sake, even in compliance with himself, and as it were to gratify his own nature, which, as nothing is more Godlike, is wont to be delighted in acts of goodness towards all, of compassion and mercy to the miserable, and of special favour to them that more peculiarly belong to him. And again, as his name signifies his glory, and principally the honour and reputation of his government; so when we pray he would do this for his name's sake, we further must be understood to mean, we desire he would do it to prevent his own dishonour, to augment his glory, and further to recommend himself to the world. And I conceive it must be meant in both these senses taken together, *viz.* that we pray he would do this or that, both from himself, and for himself; from his goodness, or indeed the general perfection of his nature, and for his glory, and that he may represent himself such as he truly is. But some circumstances in the coherent verses, afterwards to be particularly noted, seem to intimate that the honour and dignity of his government are here more directly meant. His glory is indeed the end which he cannot but design in all that he does. For inasmuch as he is said to do all things "according to the counsel of his will," (Eph. i.) his will must be principally of the end, which is ever the highest and most excellent good, and that can be no other than himself, and that only as he is capable of greatening himself by his own

action; which cannot be in respect of intrinsic excellency, that being already perfect, and capable of no addition, therefore it must be in point of glory and reputation only. And so, as it is said, "having no greater to swear by, he sware by himself." Heb. vi. 13. , So, having no greater to act for, it is most just, and most worthy of him, and but a Godlike owning of himself, to act only to and for himself. And then whereas, having this constant, just, and holy will, he doth all things according to counsel in pursuance of it, it must signify that he ever takes the aptest, and most proper methods for the advancing of his own glory,—the choosing the fittest and most suitable means to a fore-resolved end, being the proper business and design of consultation: though that be spoken of God but allusively, and after the manner of men, who, by slow degrees, and by much deliberation, arrive to the very imperfect knowledge of things, which at one view he perfectly beholds from all eternity.

But, also, how the great God designs his own glory in all that he doth, we must take great care be duly and decently understood. It were low and mean to think that the design of his mighty works, and accurate dispensations, is only that he may fill men's minds with wonder, be highly thought of, admired, and celebrated in the world, which even a wise and virtuous man would think an end much beneath him. But the glory of his name must be understood to be primarily an objective glory, that shines with a constant and equal lustre in all his dispensations, whether men observe, or observe it not; and shines primarily to himself, so as that he hath the perpetual self-satisfaction of doing as truly becomes him, and what is in itself reputable, worthy of him, and apt to approve itself to a right mind, as his own ever is, let men think of his ways as they please. Thus it was in his creating the world, when he had not yet made man, nor had him to look on, as a witness and admirer of his other glorious works, it was enough to him to be self-pleased that he saw them to be good, and that they had his own most just and complacential approbation. Nor is he less pleased with himself, in his governing the world, than he was in the making of it. As also good men, by how much the more they excel in goodness, have herein the greatest resemblance and imitation of God, doing good for goodness' sake, and pleasing themselves with the lustre and beauty of their own actions, shining to their own mind and conscience, and their discerned conformity to the steady rules of righteousness; without being concerned, whether perverse and incompetent judges approve or disapprove them. Though also, because the blessed God delights in propagating blessedness, and imparting it to his intelligent creatures, he is pleased in recommending himself, so far, to their estimation

and love, as is necessary to their own felicity, wherein also he doth as it were but enjoy his own goodness, as his own felicity can only be in himself; and is pleased with the self-satisfying beauty, pleasantness and glory of it.

Yet, further also we are to consider, that though it be most suitable to the majesty, and the independent, self-sufficient fulness of God, to take pleasure only in the real goodness, excellency, decency, and glory of whatever he is and doth; yet it belongs to, and becomes, the dutiful affection of his people towards him, to be deeply concerned how he is thought and spoken of in the world. Dishonourable reflections upon him are therefore as a sword in their bones. What cannot hurt him ought to wound them. Which dutiful love also cannot but make them highly covet that his name might be known, and renowned all the world over, knowing that the reproach, that is no real damage, is a wrong to him; and that universal praise is his right, though it cannot be an advantage. And this love to his name they cannot more fitly express, than in praying to him. And here we are further to note that this argument, thus generally considered, hath, when we use it in prayer, a twofold aspect, *i. e.* we are to consider it as an argument both to God, and to ourselves. To God, as whereby we expect to prevail with him to hear our prayers. To ourselves, as whereby we are to be urged, and excited to pray with the more importunity and confidence, so as not to faint in prayer. Thus much as to what is more general. We are now,—

Secondly, To consider it in reference to this present case. Where we are to show,—how the name of God may be understood to be concerned, in his abhorring, so as to forsake a people more peculiarly related to him, and—the fit and right use of this argument in deprecating his doing so.

1. How the name of God may be understood concerned in this matter. Taking his name to signify not only his nature, and the attributes of his being themselves, but also the glory and lustre of those his attributes, especially, which are to have a more principal exercise and demonstration in the course of his government over mankind, and, more particularly, over such a select, peculiar people; it may seem greatly to reflect upon those his governing attributes, and detract from the glory of them, and consequently to lessen the honour and dignity of his government, if having taken such a people into near and peculiar relation to him, he should grow into that dislike of them, as at length quite to reject and cast them off, as if he now disdained the relation. That such a contemptuous rejection of this people is the thing here deprecated by the prophet, is evident (besides what hath been noted of the true import of the word rendered *abhor*) from other expressions in the context, that plainly speak

this very sense, and show this to be the matter about which he was so deeply concerned. "Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul loathed Zion?" *v.* 19. And then presently is added, to the same sense, "Do not abhor us," &c. As when a man's heart is full of a thing, and the sense of it abounds, he varies expressions; and from the abundance of the heart, as from a fountain, the matter streams from him several ways. His iterations, and varied forms of speech to the same purpose, show what urged him, and about what his mind was engaged and taken up. It is plain that, at this time, that which this holy man was in this agony for was not a lighter, temporary anger, but so settled a displeasure, as upon which a final rejection was likely to ensue.

And he apprehends the name of God to be concerned in it: which it appears also lies with great weight upon his spirit; "Our iniquities testify against us, but do thou it (*i. e.* save us, as afterwards) for thy name's sake." *v.* 7. And again, (*v.* 9,) "Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not." Which also shows how he understood it to be concerned, *viz.* as the great God was not only the common Ruler of the world, but a Governor over them, in a way and upon terms that were very peculiar, *viz.* by covenant and compact—such whereof the nuptial contract is the usual resemblance; by which the related persons mutually pass into each other's right, and whereupon the inferior person in the relation takes the name of the superior, as Isa. iv. 1, "We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name." So the great God entering that covenant with a people, "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people," speaks of himself as conjugally related to them. "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord; and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married," Isa. lxii. 2—4. "Thy Maker is thine husband." Isa. liv. 5. Who being the governing relative, the phrase of being called by his name imports the agreed, voluntary subjection of such a people to his government, and his vouchsafing to be their Governor upon the special terms of his own covenant; whereupon another prophet, pleading for his special favour and protection unto this people against their heathen adversaries, uses this phrase; "We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy *name*." Isa. lxiii. 19. Therefore this prophet understood his *name* to be concerned, if he should reject them, as it signified his honour and reputation as their Governor by covenant; which further

appears by the immediate connection of these words, "Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake," with those that next follow, "Do not disgrace the throne of thy glory; remember, break not thy covenant with us:" *q. d.* "Thou hast covenanted to be our Governor, and hast erected, accordingly, thy glorious throne among us. How canst thou sustain, or endure to break thy covenant, and dishonour thy own throne; to draw a disreputation upon thy government; or cast a dark shadow upon those famed excellencies, which were wont to recommend thee in the sight of all nations as the best Ruler that ever people had; and might make the sons of men apprehend it the most desirable thing in all the world to be, on the same terms, under thy government?" Particularly of his attributes that have more special relation to his government, such as these may seem (and have been apprehended) liable to be reflected on in this case:—

(1.) His power, as if he had designed to do some great thing for them, which he could not bring about, and therefore he casts them off, and will seem no further concerned for them. Or as if his power were confined within such limits, that it would suffice him to destroy them once for all, but not constantly to preserve and prosper them. So when God threatened to smite his people Israel with the pestilence, and disinherit them, (Num. xiv. 12,) Moses urges on their behalf, "Then the Egyptians shall hear it, for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them, and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou, Lord, art among this people; that thou, Lord, art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day-time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt kill all this people, as one man, then the nations which heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness." *v.* 13—16. *q. d.* "That thou hast peculiarly owned them, and concerned thyself for them, cannot be hid. It hath made a great noise in the world, and been the common talk of all nations, and made a more special impression of awe and terror upon the Egyptians (against whom thou first tookest part with them) that thou wast usually seen face to face among them; that most extraordinary tokens of a divine presence, the miraculous pillar of a cloud by day, and of fire by night, were constantly afforded them. There is no coming off, (so far and so openly hast thou been concerned for them,) but this construction will be made of it, that though very great difficulties have been overcome for them, there was a prospect of yet greater, that could not be overcome; and therefore, that whereas less power was required to make a present end of them, thou

didst rather choose to do that." And this consideration seems sometimes to have weighed much with God himself, as we find he is brought in speaking, (Deut. xxxii. 26, 27,) "I said I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men; were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high," &c. Whence also—

(2.) His wisdom must, by consequence, be exposed too; that this was not foreseen, and considered, when he first undertook their conduct, and espoused their interest.

(3.) His goodness and benignity, his propensity to do good, and bestow favours, that it was not so unexhausted a fountain as might seem suitable to a God; and to him, whom his wonderful noted acts of favour towards that people, had made to be vogued among the nations as the only one.

(4.) His clemency and unaptness to be provoked; the great commendation of rulers: who ought to be *legum similes*, as little moved with passions as the laws they govern by; a thing especially to be expected in a divine Ruler, and most agreeable to the serenity of the nature of God; according not only to what men are commonly wont to apprehend of his nature, but what he had been pleased to declare of himself, as is alleged, (Numb. xiv. 17, 18,) "Let the power of my Lord be great;" intimating that to appear hurried with passions would seem an un-Godlike impotency; and it is added, "according as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is long-suffering and of great mercy," &c. Whereupon, therefore,—

(5.) His sincerity, another great excellency in a governor, seems liable to be suspected too: that he should not be what he seemed, had given out of himself, or was taken, at least, to be the import and signification of his former dispensations; which is the scope of Moses's reasoning, (Exod. xxxii. 12,) "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?" As if he had said, Why shall the Egyptian enemy have occasion to apprehend that God did only hide mischievous intentions towards this people, under an appearance and show of kindness to them; that he only drew them hereby to trust in him, and commit themselves to his care and protection, that he might, when he saw his time, the more please, and as it were sport himself in having deceived them, and in disappointing and destroying them? That, therefore, the God of Israel was not such a one as he seemed willing to be thought, nor a relation to him so covetable a thing? Or else,—

(6.) His constancy, and faithfulness to himself. He may be thought, in this case, more mutable, and unsteady in his own

designs than is worthy of a God. Even Balaam's notion of the Deity could not allow him to think, either first, that as a man he could lie, or next, that as the son of man he could repent. Numb. xxiii. The former he thought not agreeable to the sincerity, nor the latter to the constancy which he reckoned must belong to the nature of God. That he should appropriate a people to himself, remarkably own them by a long-continued series of eminent favours; and at length seem to grow weary of them, and his own design, and throw them off; how un-Godlike a levity doth this seem to import! and how contrary to the encouragement which we sometimes find given to such a people, even from the regard he would have to his own name in this respect, "The Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people." 1 Sam. xii. 22.

(7.) His righteousness in reference to his promise and covenant with such a people, or his faithfulness unto them. For, as considering only his purpose, and his having begun a design, his pursuing of it is but faithfulness (or a being true) to himself and his own design; so when his purpose hath expressed itself in a promise to a people, to make it good is to be faithful and true to them; and is, therefore, a part of righteousness, his promise having created a right in them to whom he made it. By his purpose he is only a debtor to himself, by his promise he is a debtor to them too. Upon this account his name seems liable to be reflected on, if he should reject such a people; as the words following the text intimate, "Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory; break not thy covenant with us." And such is the import of Moses's plea, (Numb. xiv. 16,) "Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness." Which pleading of his he himself also recites, (Deut. ix. 28,) with little variation; and implies in it, that if God should reject this people, it would turn greatly to the prejudice of his name and repute in the world, in respect of his truth and fidelity which made so great a part of his name and glory, that in his anger he neither regarded his word nor his oath; no bond was sacred with him. Than which, what could make a prince more inglorious and infamous? And how gladly would those more implacable enemies, out of whose hands he had rescued his people, catch at such an occasion of traducing and defaming him! We see then how the name of God may appear concerned in this matter. It seems, indeed, in all these respects very deeply concerned, and much exposed to obloquy, if he reject such a people. Though if he should, it can never be, but upon such terms as that all that can be objected will appear to be but groundless cavil and calumny, and admit of

easy answer, as we shall see anon. In the meantime, while the matter admits of any hope, we are—

2. To show the fitness and right use of this argument for the preventing of it. We are, indeed, manifestly to distinguish these two things:—The general fitness of this argument to be used, and—wherein stands the fit and due use of it. As any thing else, though in itself very fit to be used for such and such purposes (as meat and drink for instance, or learning or speech) may yet notwithstanding be used very unfitly. Therefore we shall speak to both these severally, and show—how fit an argument this is to be insisted on in prayer, even to the purpose we are now speaking of; and what is requisite to the due and right use of it to this purpose.

(1.) That it is in itself an argument very fit to be insisted on in prayer, to this purpose, or to any other in reference whereto it is fit for us to pray, is most evident; for it is most likely to prevail with God, being an argument taken from himself, and most fit to move and affect us; for it hath more weight in it. And we ought in prayer, as much as possible, to conform our minds to God's; so as not only to pray for the things which we apprehend him most likely to grant, but upon the same grounds, and with the same design, which he must be supposed to have in granting them, and that there be but one end and aim common to him and us. We are told that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us. 1 John v. 14. This is to ask according to his will, in the highest and most certain sense. For the first and most fixed object of any will whatsoever is the end; of any right will, the best and most excellent end, which can be but one. The divine will, we are sure, is ever right, and must so far as it is known be directive, and a rule to ours. Concerning the end it is most certainly known, he doth all things (as he made all things) for himself. Concerning the means and way to his end, we are often ignorant, and in doubt; and when we are, we then are to will nothing but upon condition that it will conduce to the great and common end of all things, and do interpretatively retract and unpray every petition in the very making it, which shall be really repugnant thereto. Nothing can move God besides. He is eternally self-moved. Our attempt will be both undutiful and vain, if we suffer our spirits to be engaged, and moved by any thing which will not be a motive unto him. Therefore no argument can be fit besides this, for his own name, or that cannot be reduced to it. But the fitness of this argument may be more distinctly shown and discerned from the following considerations, *viz.* that it is most suitable—

[1.] To the object of prayer; the glorious ever-blessed God: to whom it belongs as the appropriate, most incommunicable

prerogative of the Godhead, to be the last, as well as the first, the Alpha and the Omega; the end, as he is the Author of all things. "Of whom, and through whom, and to whom all things are; and unto whom must be all glory for ever." Rom. xi. 36. So that to pray to him that he would do this or that, finally and ultimately for any thing else than his own name; is humbly to supplicate him that he would resign the Godhead, and quit his throne to this or that creature.

[2.] To the right subject of prayer, considered whether according to its original or renewed state; according to primitive nature, or renewing grace. To primitive nature; which was no doubt pointed upon God as the last end: otherwise a creature had been made with aversion to him, and in the highest pitch of enmity and rebellion; since there can be no higher controversy than about the last end.—And to renewing grace; the design whereof, as it is such, can be no other than to restore us to our original state; to bring us back, and state us where, and as we were, in that absolute subordination to God that was original and natural to us: which therefore stands in repentance towards God as our end, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as our way, wherein alone we can acceptably return and render ourselves back unto him. "We through the law are dead to the law," being humbled, broken, macerated, mortified by it, we are become dead to it, exempt from its execrating, condemning power and dominion, "that we might live to God," (Gal. ii. 19,) that a new divine life and nature might spring up in us, aiming at God, tending and working entirely, and only towards him. We have been reduced to a chaos, to utter confusion, or even brought to nothing, that we might be created anew, with a re-implanted disposition to serve the ends and purposes for which we were first made; and therefore are "to yield ourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead," (Rom. vi. 13;) *i. e.* (as *v.* 11,) "alive to God through Jesus Christ." In him we are "created to good works, (that are principally to be estimated from the end) which God had before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. ii. 10. Thus we are reconciled to God. The controversy is taken up, which was about no lower thing than the Deity; who should be God, he or we: whether we should live and be for ourselves, or him. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are past away, behold, all things are become new; and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. v. 17, 18. Hereupon this is, in prayer, the only proper genuine connatural breath of the new creature, the most inward habitual sense of a devoted soul, "To thee, O Lord, be all things; mayest thou ever be the all in all. Let the creation and all things be nothing, otherwise than in thee, and for thee!"

[3.] To the Mediator in whose name we pray: who never undertook that part of mediating between God and us with a design to alienate, and give away from God, the natural rights of the Godhead; but to assert them to the highest, to repair unto God, and expiate by his blood, the encroachments we had made upon them, and provide we might do so no more: that we might be forgiven what was past, and be dutiful and subject for the future. His principal design was to salve the injured honour and dignity of the divine government, and to reconcile therewith our impunity and felicity, to make them consist. He was therefore to redeem us to God by his blood. Rev. v. 9. How immodest and absurd a confidence were it, for any to make use of the Mediator's name in prayer against his principal and most important design!

[4.] To the Spirit of prayer who, we are told, (Rom. viii. 37,) makes intercession for the saints κατὰ Θεόν. We read *according to the will of God*, but no more is in the text than *according to God, i.e.* in subserviency to him, and his interest, so as that in prayer, by the dictate of that Spirit, they supremely mind the things of God, and are most intent upon his concernments, and upon their own only in subordination to his. As it may well be supposed his own Spirit will be true to him, and not act the hearts which it governs, otherwise; and that the prayers that are from himself, and of his own inspiring, will be most entirely loyal, and import nothing but duty and devotedness to him.

[5.] To the most perfect model and platform of prayer given us by our Lord himself. In which the first place is given to the petition, "Hallowed be thy name;" and the two next are about God's concernments, before any are mentioned of our own. So that the things we are to desire, are digested into two tables, as the decalogue is, containing the things we are to do; and those that respect God (as was fit) set first.

[6.] To the constant tenor of the prayers of holy men in Scripture. We have seen how earnestly Moses presses this argument in the mentioned places, Exod. xxxii. and Num. xiv. And so doth Samuel express his confidence in it, when he promises, upon their desire, to pray for the trembling people of Israel. 1 Sam. xii. 22, 23. "The Lord will not forsake his people *for his great name's sake*, because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people. Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you." And this was a pair whom God hath himself dignified as persons of great excellency in prayer, and whose prayers he would have a value for, if for any man's. "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me," &c. Jer. xv. 1. Thus also doth Joshua insist, upon occasion of that rebuke Israel met with before Ai. Josh. vii. 8,

9. "O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth; and what wilt thou do unto thy great *name?*" And so doth Daniel plead (one of a famous triad too, of potent wrestlers in prayer. Ezek. xiv. 14,) "O Lord hear; O Lord forgive; O Lord, hearken, and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people *are called by thy name.*" Dan. ix. 19.

[7.] To the highest example and pattern of prayer, (fit to be mentioned apart,) our Lord himself; who, in some of his last agonies, praying, "Father, save me from this hour," represses that innocent voice; "but therefore came I to this hour;" and adds, "Father, glorify thy name," (John xii. 27, 28,) intimating that the sum of his desires did resolve it into that one thing, and contented to suffer what was most grievous to himself, that so that might be done which should be finally most honourable to that great name.

[8.] To the design and end of prayer: which is partly and principally to be considered as an act of worship, a homage to the great God, and so the design of it is to honour him; and partly as a means, or way of obtaining for ourselves the good things we pray for, which therefore is another, but an inferior end of prayer. Whether we consider it under the one notion or the other, or propound to ourselves the one or the other end in praying; it is most agreeable to pray after this tenor, and to insist most upon this argument in prayer. For,—

First, Do we intend prayer as a homage to the great God, and to give him his due glory in praying to him? How fitly doth it fall in with our design, when not only our praying itself, but the matter we chiefly pray for, have the same scope and end. We pray that we may glorify God. And the thing we more principally desire of him in prayer, is that he would glorify himself, or that his name be glorified; and square all other desires by this measure, desiring nothing else but what may be, or as it is subservient hereto. And,—

Secondly, If we intend and design any thing of advantage to ourselves, we can only expect to be heard, and to obtain it upon this ground. The great God deals plainly with us in this, and hath expressly declared that if he hear, and graciously answer us, it will only be upon this consideration, as is often inculcated, (Ezek. xxxvi. 22,) "Therefore say unto the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy *name's* sake. And I will sanctify my great *name*, which was profaned among the heathen." And again, "Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you; be ashamed and confounded for your own

ways, O house of Israel." *v.* 32. This every way then appears a most fit argument to be insisted on in prayer; and to this purpose as well as to any other; many of the instances mentioned from Scripture, having an express and particular reference to this very case, of praying for a people related to God, and upon whom his name was called. It remains then to show,—

(2.) What is requisite to the right and due use of this argument unto this purpose. Where we may sum up all in two words, *sincerity* and *submission*. The former whereof belongs to this case in common with all others, wherein we can use this argument, or, which is all one, wherein we can pray at all. The other hath somewhat a more peculiar reference to this case considered apart by itself. And indeed that the one and the other of these are requisite in the use of this argument, are both of them corollaries from the truth itself we have been hitherto insisting on, and that have the very substance and spirit of it in them. For if this be an argument fit to be used in prayer at all, it is obvious to collect, that it ought to be used with great sincerity in any case, and with much submission, especially, in such a case as this.

[1.] It is requisite we use this argument with sincerity, *i. e.* that we have a sense in our hearts correspondent to the use of it, or that the impression be deeply inwrought into our spirits of the glorious excellency of the name of God; so as it be really the most desirable thing in our eyes, that it be magnified and rendered most glorious, whatsoever becomes of us, or of any people or nation under heaven. Many have learned to use the words, "for thy name's sake," as a *formula*, "a plausible phrase," a customary, fashionable form of speech, when, first, there is no inward sense in their hearts that doth *subesse*, "lies under" the expression, so as that with them it can be said to signify any thing, or have any meaning at all. Or, secondly, they may have much another meaning from what these words do import, a very low, self-regarding one. As when in praying for a people that bear this name, of whom themselves are a part, these words are in their mouths, but their hearts are really solicitous for nothing but their own little concernments, their wealth, and peace, and ease, and fleshly accommodations; apprehending a change of religion cannot fall out among such a people, but in conjunction with what may be dangerous to themselves in these mean respects: whereupon it may fall out that they will pray earnestly, cry aloud, be full of concern, vehemently importunate, and all the noise and cry mean nothing but their own corn, wine, and oil. They mention the name of the Lord, but not in truth. It appears the servants of God in the use of this argument have been touched in their very souls with so deep and quick a sense of the dignity and honour of the divine name, that nothing else

hath seemed considerable with them, or worth the regarding besides: as in those pathetic expostulations, "What wilt thou do to thy great name? What will the Egyptians say?" &c. This alone, apart from their own concernments, was the weighty argument with them. For it weighed nothing with Moses, on the contrary, to be told, "I will make of thee a great nation:" to have himself never so glorious a name, to be spread in the world and transmitted to all after ages as the root and father of a mighty people, was a light thing in comparison of the injury and disreputation that would be done to God's own name, if he should desert or destroy this people. Or, thirdly, they may have a very wicked meaning. The name of God may be invoked, religious solemnities used, as a pretence and colour to flagitious actions. *In nomine Domini*, &c. Most execrable villainies have been prefaced with that sacred, adorable name. As when a fast was proclaimed, but a rapine upon Naboth's vineyard was the thing designed; and the awful name of God was indifferently used, in prayer and in perjury, to serve the same vile purpose. In which soever of those degrees this venerable name is *insincerely* mentioned, we ought to account a great requisite is wanting to a right use of it as an argument in prayer; and should consider both the absurdity and the iniquity of our so misusing it.

First. The absurdity, for who can reasonably think him capable of hearing our prayers, whom at the same time he thinks incapable of knowing our hearts? Am I consistent with myself when I invocate, worship, trust in him as a God, whom I think I can impose upon by a false show? Is it likely, if I can deceive him, that he can help and succour me?

Secondly. The iniquity. For this can be no low (though it be not the peculiar) sense of taking the name of the Lord our God in vain. And we know with what awful words that great precept is enforced. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." Nor can any man devise to put a greater affront upon him than to approach him with insincerity. For it is to use him as a senseless idol, and signifies as if I counted him as the vanities of the Gentiles, one of their inanimate or brutal gods; denies his omniscience to discern, and his justice and power to revenge the indignity, all at once. And what now is to be expected from such a prayer wherein I both fight with myself and him at the same time? With myself, for the same object that I worship, I affront in the same act; and with him, for my worship is but seeming, and the affront real.

Such a disagreement with myself were enough to blast my prayer. The ἀνὴρ δίψυχος, "the man with two souls," (Jam. 1,) the double-minded man, is said to be ἀκατάστατος, *unstable (inconsistent with himself*, the word signifies) "and let not such a man

think, (saith the apostle,) that he shall receive any thing of the Lord:" much more when his prayer is not only not acceptable to God, but offensive; and by which he is so far from pleasing, that he provokes.

It is, then, of unspeakable concernment to us in the use of this argument, that we understand ourselves. Let us search our hearts, and see that we mean as we speak, that we do not pretend a concernedness and zeal for the name of God, when he that knows all things, knows that we lie; and that we do but flatter him with our mouth, and lie unto him with our tongues, when our heart is not right with him, (Ps. lxxviii. 36, 37 :) that we do not seem to be in great perplexity about the name and glory of God, when we are quite unconcerned what becomes of his name, are only solicitous lest we should suffer ourselves, afraid of being undone, of losing our estates, or of being driven from our dwellings, or perhaps but of being abridged somewhat of our conveniences, and more delectable enjoyments. As if (not the fortunes of Cæsar, and the empire, but) the mighty and all-comprehensive name of the great Lord of heaven and earth did depend upon our being rich or quiet, and at our ease, and having our sense and fancy gratified. As if the heavens rested upon our shoulders, and the frame of the universe were sustained by us, who ourselves need such pitiful supports, lean upon shadows, and if they fail us are ready to sink and drop into nothing!

[2.] Submission is highly requisite especially in a case of this nature, *i. e.* we are to submit to his judgment the disposal both of his concernments, which this argument directly intends, and our own, which we are too apt indirectly to connect with his, so as to be more principally solicitous about them.

First. His concernment in this case must (as is fit) be submitted with all humble deference to his own judgment, it being really a doubtful case, not whether it be a desirable thing, that the name and honour of God should be preserved and advanced, or whether we should desire it; but whether his continuing such a people in visible relation to himself, or rejecting and casting them off, will be more honourable and glorious to him? Where the doubt lies, there must be the submission, *i. e.* this matter must be referred to himself, it being such as whereof he only is the competent judge, and not we. The thing to be judged of, is not whether occasion may not be taken by men of short discourse, and of profane minds, to think and speak reflectingly of such a piece of providence, *viz.* if a people whom God had long visibly owned and favoured should be, at length, rejected with detestation, and exposed to ruin. It is like the heathen nations were very apt so to insult, when God did finally abandon and give up that people of the Jews, and make them

cease at once to be his people, and any people at all. As we know they did before, when they gained any temporary advantage upon them, upon their being able to spoil their country, to reduce them to some distress, and straiten their chief city with a siege; as if they had them totally in their power, they presently draw the God of Israel into an ignominious comparison with the fictitious deities of other vanquished countries: the gods of Hamath, Arphad, Sepharvaim, (Is. xxxvi. 19,) (who are also styled their kings, as is thought,* 2 Kings xix. 13, though the destruction of their kings may also admit to be meant as an argument of the impotency of their gods; and they are mentioned distinctly, as perhaps was not observed, in both those cited books of Scripture where that history is more largely recorded, 2 Kings xviii. 34, *ch.* xix. 13; and Isa. xxxvi. 19, *ch.* xxxvii. 12, 13;) as if he were able to do no more for the protection of his people, than they for their worshippers. And so, for a few moments, he remains under the censure of being an impotent God. But that momentary cloud he knew how soon to dispel, and make his glory shine out so much the more brightly unto, not only a convincing, but an amazing confutation of so profane folly; yielded the short-sighted adversary a temporary victory, which he could presently redeem out of their hands, that he might the more gloriously triumph in their surprising, unfeared ruin; and so let them and all the world see that those advantages were not extorted, but permitted upon considerations that lay out of their reach to comprehend; and that they proceeded not from want of power, but the excellency of other perfections, which would in due time be understood by such as were capable of making a right judgment,—his wisdom, holiness and justice which appeared in putting a people, so related to him, under seasonable rebukes and discountenance, when the state of the case, and the methods of his government required it: and so much the rather because they were so related; according to that, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." Amos iii. 2. The matter here to be disputed, was not whether it did not occasion a present dishonour to the God of Israel, to let the enemy have such a seeming ground of spiteful suggestions concerning him, as if he were impotent, or variable, or false to them that had intrusted themselves to his protection and care; but whether that dishonour were not recompensed with advantage, by the greater glory that accrued to him afterwards. And this also is the matter that must come under judgment, if at length he should finally cast off such a people; whether upon the whole, all things being considered and taken together, it be not more for the honour of his name, and the reputation of his

* Selden, de Diis Syris. ii. cap. 16.

rectoral attributes, to break off such a relation to them, than continue it. Wherein he is not concerned to approve himself to the opinion of fools, or half-witted persons; and whose shallow judgment, too, is governed by their disaffection; but to such as can consider: perhaps, to such as shall hereafter rise up in succeeding ages. For he is not in haste. His steady duration, commensurate with all the successions of time, and which runs into eternity, can well admit of his staying till this or that frame and contexture of Providence be completed, and capable of being more entirely viewed at once, and till calmer minds, and men of less interested passions shall come to have the considering of it. And in the meantime he hath those numberless myriads of wise and holy sages in the other world, the continual observers of all his dispensations, that behold them with equal, unbiassed minds; and, from the evidence of the matter, give their concurrent approbation and applause, with all the true members of the church on earth, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Rev. xv. 3. But it is enough, and much more considerable, to approve himself to himself; and that all his dispensations are guided according to the steady, eternal reason of things, which is an inviolable law to him, from which he never departs, and from the perpetual, uniform agreement of all his providences whereto an indubious glory will result unto him, that will never admit the least eclipse, or ever be capable of being drawn into dispute: and according whereto it will appear, if ever he forsake such a people, the concernment of his name and glory in the matter was the great inducement to it, that he did even owe it to himself, and had not, otherwise, done right to his own name. And whatsoever might be argued from it to the contrary will be found capable of a clear and easy answer, so as that the weight of the argument will entirely lie on this side. For—

As to his power, he hath reason to be ever secure concerning the reputation of that, having given, and knowing how further to give, when he pleases, sufficient demonstrations of it other ways. Nor was it ever his design to represent himself as a Being of mere power, which of itself hath nothing of moral excellency in it; nor do the appearances of it tend to beget that true notion of God in the minds of men which he designed to propagate; otherwise than as the glory of it should shine in conjunction with that of his other attributes that are more peculiarly worthy of God, more appropriate to him, and more apt to represent him to the world as the most suitable object of a religious veneration. Whereas, mere power is capable of having place in an unintelligent nature, and in an intelligent, tainted with the most odious impurities; he never desired to be known

among men by such a name, as should signify power only, unaccompanied with wisdom, holiness, &c. And—

For his wisdom; it is seen in pursuing valuable ends, by methods suitable to them, and becoming himself. It became the absolute sovereignty of a God, to select a nation that he would favour more than other nations; but it would ill have agreed with his wisdom to have bound himself absolutely to them, so to favour them, howsoever they should demean themselves.

His bounty and goodness, though it found them no better than other people, was to have made them better. Nor was it any disreputation to his goodness to divert its current, when they, after long trial, do finally resist its design.

His clemency must not be made liable to be mistaken for inadvertency, or neglect; and to give the world cause to say, "Tush, God seeth not, neither is there knowledge in the Most High:" nor for indifferency, and unconcernedness what men do, as if good and bad were alike to him, and that such as do evil were good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighted in them; words wherewith he sometime complained that men wearied him. Mal. ii. 17. He is not to redeem the reputation of one attribute by the real prejudice of another; *i. e.* the offence and grievance to it, which acting directly against it (if that were possible) would occasion.

His sincerity will be highly vindicated and glorified, when it shall be seen that there is nothing more of severity in such a dispensation, whenever it takes place, than was plainly expressed in his often repeated forewarnings and threatenings, even long before. And therefore—

He is herein but *constant to himself,* and should be more liable to the charge of mutability and inconstancy, if finally, when the case should so require, he should not take this course. And—

As to his *righteousness and fidelity* towards such a people, even those to whom he more strictly obliged himself than ever he did to any particular nation besides; let but the tenor of his covenant with them be consulted, and see whether he did not reserve to himself a liberty of casting them off, if they revolted from him: and whether these were not his express terms, that he would be with them while they were with him, but that if they forsook him, he would forsake them also.

Therefore much more is he at liberty, as to any other people, to whom he never made so peculiar promises of external favours as he did to this people. Nor hereupon can any thing be pleaded from his name, or that is, within the compass of its signification, with any certainty that it shall conclude, and be determining on the behalf of such a people. There is a real, great doubt in the case, whether the argument may not weigh more the other way: and whether the wickedness of such a people may not be grown

to such a prodigious excess, that whereas none of these his mentioned attributes do make it necessary he should continue his relation, some other, that could not be alleged for it, may not be alleged against it, and do not make it necessary he should break it off. The glory of his holiness (which if we consider it in itself, and consider the value and stress he is wont to put upon it, we might even reckon the prime glory of the Deity) is not, perhaps, to be sufficiently salved and vindicated without, at length, quite abandoning and casting them off. There seems to be somewhat very awful and monitory in those most pleasant, gracious words, and that breathe so sweet a savour: but now they "desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God," (Heb. xi. 16;) *viz.* that if a people that have long enjoyed brighter discoveries of heaven, and the way to it, do yet generally bear a disaffected heart to the design of that revelation, remain habitually terrene like the rest of the world, governed by the spirit of it, ingulphed in the common pollutions, sensualities, impieties of the wicked atheistical inhabitants of this earth; God will be even ashamed to be called their God. He will reckon it ignominious, and a reproach to him, (though he will save such as are sincere among them) to stand visibly related to such a people as their God. What, to have them for a peculiar people, that are not peculiar! to distinguish them that will not be distinguished! To make a visible difference by external favours and privileges, where there is no visible difference in practice and conversation; that might signify a more excellent spirit, this is not only to lose the intended design, but to have it turn to a disadvantage; and whom he expected to be for a name and a praise to him, a crown and a royal diadem, to become to him a dishonour and a blot. And we do find that such severities as have been used towards such a people, are declared to have been so, even for the sake of his name. Jer. xxxiv. 16, 17. "But ye turned and polluted my name—therefore I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth." And when therefore a remnant of this people, rebelliously, against God's express word, went down into Egypt, preferring a precarious subsistence, under tyranny and idolatry, at the cruel mercy of a long-since baffled enemy, before the true religion, and liberty under the divine protection, see how God expresses his resentment of this dishonour done to his name, and the affront offered to his government. Jer. xliv. 26. "Therefore, hear ye the word of the Lord, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord God liveth."

And when the time drew nearer of God's total rejection of

that people, as in the time of Malachi's prophecies; they are charged with despising and profaning his name, (*ch.* i. 5, 6, 12,) and are told God had now no pleasure in them, nor would accept an offering at their hands, but that his name should be great among the Gentiles, (*v.* 10, 11,) even from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same; intimating that—excepting those few that thought on his name, (*ch.* iii. 16,) and that feared his name, (*ch.* iv. 2,) who, he says, should be his when he made up his jewels, and the Sun of Righteousness should rise upon them—he would have no more to do with them, but in the day that should burn as an oven, (when the whole hemisphere should be as one fiery vault) they should be burnt up as stubble, and neither root nor branch be left of them; and all this upon the concern he had for his name, which was reproached by such a people's pretending to it. Whereupon, they had been threatened, (*ch.* ii. 2,) that except they did give glory to his name, he would curse them and their blessings, corrupt their seed, spread dung upon their faces, even that of their solemn feasts, and they should be taken away therewith.

It is therefore possible the whole force of this argument may lie against us in praying for such a people;—I say, it is possible it may, whether actually it do or no, we can never be competent judges. Our knowledge is not large enough, nor our minds enough comprehensive. Our wisdom is folly itself to the estimating such a case. We are capable of pronouncing hastily, it would in this or that particular respect be dishonourable, and an obscurement of God's name, if he should cast off England. But he that pronounces hastily, considers but a few things, and looks but a little way.

The question is, whether, all things compared and considered together that belong to such a case, it will be more honourable to God or dishonourable, and more or less recommend him to intelligent minds, get him a greater and more excellent name and renown in the world, when it shall be enlightened to consider the case, to break off his relation or continue it? We know his own judgment is according to truth, and hope he will judge the way that will be more favourable to us. But we cannot be certain of it. It is a case that requires the judgment of his all-comprehending mind, whose prospect is large every way; and takes in all the decencies and indecencies that escape our notice. As we know in viewing things with the eye, a quick and clear sight, (especially helped with a fit instrument) will discern many things, so fine and minute, as to be, to a duller eye, altogether invisible. It is the work of wisdom and judgment, to discern exactly the critical seasons, and junctures of time, when to do this or that. And the wise God in his dispensations, especially towards a great community, or the collective

body of a people, takes usually a vast compass of time, within which to select the apt and fit season, for this or that act, whether of severity or mercy towards them. And it is more fit, as by the coincidence of things it contributes more to the greater glory of his name. We cannot discern the things, the concurrence whereof makes this a fitter season than another, that such an event should be placed just there, within so large a tract of time. What mortal man, or indeed what finite mind, was capable of judging some hundreds of years before, what was just wanting to the fulness of the Amorites' sin, so as that it should be more honourable and glorious to the divine justice, not to animadvert thereon, till that very time when he did it: or why he chose that time which he pitched upon, wherein to come down, and deliver his Israel from their Egyptian oppressors: or when (without inspiration) to be able to say, "the time to favour Zion, even the set time is come." Nor are we to resolve the matter only into the absoluteness of his sovereignty, upon the account whereof he may take what time he pleases, but the depth of his hidden wisdom, for he "doth all things according to the counsel of his will," having reasons to himself, which our shallow, dim sight perceives not, and whereof we are infinitely less able to make a sure judgment, than a country idiot of reasons of state. He may (as to the present case) think it most fit, most honourable, and glorious, so often to forgive, or so long to forbear such a delinquent people; and may, at length, judge it most becoming him, and most worthy of him, as he is the common Ruler of the world, and their injured, despised Ruler, to strike the fatal stroke, and quite cut them off from him.

Now here it is, therefore, necessarily our duty, to use this argument with him of his name, so as wholly to submit the matter to his judgment, and but conditionally, if it will indeed make most for the glory of his name, that then he will not abhor and reject such a people even for his name's sake. Nor can we herein be too importunate, if we be not peremptory; not too intent upon the end, the glory of his name, for about the goodness, excellency, and desirableness of that we are certain, if we be not too determinate about the means, or what will be most honourable to his name, concerning which we are uncertain. Neither is it disallowed us to use the best judgment we can, about the means, and the interest of God's name in this case. It is not our fault to be mistaken—he expects us not to use the judgment of gods. But it will be our fault to be peremptory and confident in a matter wherein we may be mistaken; and must signify too much officiousness, as if we understood his affairs better than himself; and a bold insolence to take upon us to be the absolute judges of what we understand not; and to cover our presumption with a pretence of duty. Therefore

though such a people be dear to us, yet because his name ought to be infinitely more dear, that in the settled bent of our hearts we ought to prefer; and be patient of his sentence, whatever it prove to be, with deep resentment of our own desert, but with high complacency that his name is vindicated and glorified; and with a sincere, undissembled applause of the justice of his proceedings, how severe soever they may be towards us: especially if we have reason to hope that severity will terminate but in a temporary discountenance and frown, not in a final rejection.

Secondly. Much more are we to submit our own secular concernments, which may be involved: *i. e.* we ought only to pray, we may have the continued, free profession and exercise of our religion, in conjunction with the comfortable enjoyment of the good things of this life, if that may consist with, and best serve the honour of his great name. But if he do really make this judgment in our case, that we have so misdemeaned ourselves, and been so little really better to common observation, in our practice and conversation, than men of a worse religion, that he cannot without injury to his name, and the reputation of his government, countenance us against them, by the visible favours of his providence; that it will not be honourable for him to protect us in our religion, to so little purpose, and while we so little answer the true design of it; that if we will retain our religion (which we know we are upon no terms to quit) we must suffer for it, and sanctify that name before men by our suffering, which we dishonoured by our sinning: we have nothing left us to do but to submit to God, to humble ourselves under his mighty hand, to accept the punishment of our sin, to put off our ornaments, expecting what he will do with us; and be content that our dwellings, our substance, our ease and rest, our liberties and lives, if he will have it so, be all sacrifices to the honour of that excellent name. Nor can our use of this argument want such submission without much insincerity. Concerning this, therefore, look back to what was said on the former head.

Nor is there any hardship in the matter, that we are thus limited in our praying for what even nature itself teacheth us to desire, our safety, peace, and outward comforts; unless we count it a hardship that we are creatures, and that God is God, and that ours is not the supreme interest. The desires of the sensitive nature are not otherwise to be formed into petitions than by the direction of the rational, that also being governed by a superadded, holy, divine nature; unto which it is a supreme and a vital law, that God is to be the first eyed in every thing. Reason teaches that so it should be, and grace makes it be so. And it ought to be far from us to think this a hardship; when in reference to our greater and more considerable concernments,

those of our souls, and our eternal states, we are put upon no such (dubious, suspenseful) submission. He hath not, in these, left the matter at all doubtful, or at any uncertainty, whether he will reckon it more honourable to his name to save, or destroy eternally, a sincerely penitent, believing, obedient soul. He hath settled a firm connection between the felicity of such and his own glory; and never put it upon us, as any part of our duty, to be contented to perish for ever, that he may be glorified; or ever to ask ourselves whether we are so content or no. For he hath made such things our present, immediate, indispensable duty, as with which our perishing is not consistent, and upon supposition whereof, it is impossible we should not be happy. If we believe in his Son, and submit to his government, his name pleads irresistibly for our being saved by him. He can have no higher glory from us, than that we be to the praise of the glory of his grace, being once accepted in the Beloved. Neither is it disallowed us to do the part of *concives*, fellow-members of a community, civil, or spiritual, to pray very earnestly for our people, city, country, that are so justly dear to us. Only since prayer itself is an acknowledgment of his superiority to whom we pray; and we have no argument that we ought to hope should prevail, but that of his own name; we can but pray and plead as the nature of prayer, and the import of that argument will admit, *i.e.* with entire subjection to his holy and sovereign will, and subordination to his supreme interest, to whom we address ourselves in prayer.

III. And now the use this will be of to us, is partly to correct and reprehend our prayers, wherein they shall be found disagreeable to the true import of this argument; and partly to persuade unto, and encourage such praying, as shall be agreeable to it.

First. It justly and aptly serves to reprehend and correct such praying as disagrees with it; especially the carnality and the selfishness of our prayers. The use of this argument implies that the glory of God, and the exaltation of his name, should be the principal design of our prayers. Is it not in these respects much otherwise? We keep fast after fast, and make many prayers. And what is the chief design of them? or the thing we are most intent, and which our hearts are principally set upon? We see how God expostulates this matter, (Zech. vii. 5,) "When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me?" Why, to whom can it be thought this people did keep fasts but unto God? Yes, no doubt they did eye him, as the object, but not as the end. They were kept to him, but not for him, so as that his interest and glory was the thing prin-

cipally designed in them; nor can it be, if the things we chiefly insist upon be such as have no connection with his true interest, or subserviency to it. And let us inquire, upon these two heads, whether our prayers, in these respects, do not run in such a strain as that they cannot possibly be understood to mean him, or have a true reference to him.

1. In respect of the *carnality* of them. When we pray for the people of our own land, or for the Christian church more generally, what sort of evils is it that we find our hearts most feelingly to deprecate, and pray against? What are the good things we chiefly desire of them? We find ourselves, it is likely, to have somewhat a quick sense, and dread of the calamities of war, depredation, oppression, persecution; and we feel, probably, somewhat of sympathy within ourselves, when we hear of any abroad, professing true, reformed Christianity, that suffer the spoiling of their goods, are banished from their pleasant homes, dragged to prisons, pressed with pinching necessities, for the sake of their religion; and it were well if our compassions were more enlarged in such cases. And if we should hear of nations depopulated, cities sacked, towns and countries deluged with blood and slaughter, these things would certainly have an astonishing sound in our ears. But have we any proportionable sense of the spiritual evils that waste and deform the Christian church, exhaust its strength and vigour, and blemish its beauty and glory;—ignorance, terrene inclination, glorying in the external forms of religion, while the life and power of it are unknown and denied, estrangement from God, real infidelity towards the Redeemer, veiled over by pretended, nominal Christianity, uncharitableness, pride, wrath, strife, envy, hatred, hypocrisy, deceitfulness towards God and man? We ought to lament and deprecate the former evils without over-looking these, or counting them less, or being less affected with them. We are apt to pray for peace unto the Christian community, for halcyon days, prosperity, the abundance of all outward blessings, in conjunction with the universal reception of such forms of religion as are most agreeable to our minds and inclinations. But do we as earnestly pray for the reviving of primitive Christianity, and that the Christian church may shine in the beauties of holiness, in heavenliness, faith, love to God and one another, in simplicity, meekness, patience, humility, contempt of this present world, and purity from all the corruptions of it? This we chiefly ought to have done, without leaving the other undone. Which, while it is left out of our prayers, or not more principally insisted on in them, how ill do they admit of enforcement by this argument from the name of God! For do we think it is so very honourable to his name, to be the

God of an opulent, luxurious, voluptuous, proud, wrathful, contentious people, under what religious form or denomination soever.

2. But also do not our prayers chiefly *centre in ourselves*, while we make a customary, (not understood) use in them of the name of God? And when we principally design ourselves in our prayers, what is it we covet most for ourselves? It is not agreeable to the holy, new divine nature, to desire to engross spiritual good things to ourselves; when for others, we desire only the good things of this earth. But if our prayers do only design the averting from ourselves outward calamities, or inconveniences, and the obtaining only of ease, indulgence, and all grateful accommodations to our flesh, how absurd an hypocrisy is it to fashion up such a petition, by adding to it, "for thy name's sake!" As if the name of God did oblige him to consult the ease and repose of our flesh! When our souls, thereby, are made and continued the nurseries of all the evil, vicious inclinations, which show themselves in our practice, most of all to the dishonour of that name, what subordination is there here? Manifest is the opposition of our carnal interest, to the interest and honour of the blessed name of God. If a malefactor, convicted of the highest crimes against the government, should petition for himself to this purpose, that it will bring a great disreputation upon authority, and detract from the famed clemency and goodness of the prince, if any punishment should be inflicted on him for his offences, or if he be not indulged and suffered to persist in them; how would this petition sound with sober intelligent men? It is no wonder our flesh regrets suffering, but it is strange our reason should be so lost, as to think, at random, that, right or wrong, the name of God is not otherwise to be indemnified than by its being saved from suffering. As if the gratification of our flesh, and the glory of God's name, were so very nearly related, and so much akin to one another! And now this carnal self-interest, insinuating itself, and thus distorting our prayers, is the radical evil in them, and the first and original part of their faultiness. For it is not likely we should love others better than ourselves; therefore we cannot go higher in supplicating for others. But yet we inconsiderately mention the name of God for fashion's sake, though it be no way concerned in the matter, unless to vindicate and greaten itself in rejecting us and our prayers together.

Secondly. The further use of what hath been said upon this subject, will be to persuade and engage us to have more regard to the name of God in our prayers, especially in praying about national and public concernments; or such external concernments of our own as are involved with them:—that, in the habitual temper of our spirits, we be so entirely and absolutely devoted to God, and

the interest of his great name, that our prayers may savour of it, and be of an agreeable strain; that the inward sense of our souls may fully correspond to the true import of this argument, and our hearts may not reproach us, when we use it, as only pretending God, but meaning ourselves; and that only our carnal self, the interest whereof alone can be in competition with that of God's name; and which, while it prevails in us, will be the measure of our prayers for others also; that the meaning of our words may not be one, and the meaning of our hearts another, that we may truly mean as we speak, when we use the words, "for thy name's sake;" and that our hearts may bear us this true testimony, that we desire nothing but in due subordination to the glory of his name;—external favours, with limitations, only so far as they may; and spiritual blessings, absolutely, because they certainly will, admit of this subordination. And to this purpose let it be considered,—

1. How unsuitable it is to the condition of a creature, that it should be otherwise. That were, certainly, a most uncreaturely prayer, that should be of a contrary tenor. Let us but digest and state the case aright in our own thoughts. Admit we are praying with great ardency on the behalf of a people to which we are related, and who are also related to God. It can scarce be thought we are more concerned for them than for ourselves; or that we love them more than we do ourselves. Our love to ourselves is the usual measure of our love to others. And that is higher in the same kind, which is the measure of all besides that belongs to that kind. When, therefore, we are much concerned for the external felicity of such a people, it is very natural to be more deeply concerned for our own. Now if the sense of our hearts, in such a prayer, will not agree with the true import of these words, "for thy name's sake;" because indeed, we are more concerned for our own carnal peace, ease, and accommodation, than we are for the name of God; let us, that we may have the matter more clearly in view, put our request into such words as wherewith the sense of our hearts will truly agree;—and will it not be thus, "Lord, whatever becomes of thy name, let nothing be done that shall be grievous and disquieting to my flesh?" which is as much as to say, "Quit thy throne to it, resign thy government, abandon all thy great interest, for the service and gratification of this animated clod of clay;" and do we not now begin to blush at our own prayer? We easily slide over such a matter as this, while our sense is more latent, and not distinctly reflected on, but let us have it before us *conceptis verbis;* let it appear with its own natural *face* and *look;* and now see what horror and detestableness it carries with it! And dare we now put up so treasonable a prayer? It would puzzle all our arithmetic, to assign the *quota pars*, or

the *proportional part* any of us is, of the universe, or the whole creation of God! And do I then think it fit that the heavens should roll for me, or all the mighty wheels of providence move only with regard to my convenience? If a worm in your garden were capable of thought, and because it is permitted to crawl there, should think, This garden was made for me, and every thing in it ought to be ordered for my accommodation and pleasure, would you not wonder that such insolence, and a disposition to think so extravagantly, should be in conjunction with the thinking power or an ability to think at all? If we allow ourselves in that far greater (infinitely more unbeseeming, and disproportionable) petulancy, do we think when the roller comes it will scruple to crush us, or have regard to our immodest, pretenceless claim? Let us consider what little, minute things, how next to nothing, we are, even compared with all the rest of the world! What are we then compared with the Maker and Lord of it, in comparison of whom the whole is but as the drop of a bucket, or the small dust of the balance, lighter than nothing and vanity! We should more contemplate ourselves in such a comparison; many comparing themselves with themselves are not wise. While we confine and limit our eye only to ourselves, we seem great things, fancy ourselves very considerable. But what am I? What is my single personality, ipseity, self-hood, (call it what you will) to Him who is the All in All; whose being (actually, or radically) comprehends all being, all that I can conceive, and the infinitely greater all, that I cannot? If, therefore, I take in, with myself, the whole body of a people besides, that I am concerned for, and admit that a generous love to my country should make me prefer their concernments to my own; or that upon a higher account, as they are a people related to God, I could even lay down my life for them; what are we all, and all our interests, to that of His Name? And if we should all agree in a desire, that our interest should be served upon the dishonour of that name, it were but a treasonable conspiracy against our common, rightful Lord: and a foolish one, being expressed in a prayer; as if we thought to engage him, by our faint breath, against himself. We are to desire no more for them, than they may for themselves. And if we have joined in open sinning against him, to that height that he shall judge he is obliged, for the vindication and honour of his name, (by which we have been called) of his wisdom, holiness, and punitive justice, as openly to animadvert upon us, can we gainsay? If we knew of such a judgment, nothing could remain for us but shame and silence, conviction of ill desert, and patient bearing the punishment of our sin. And while we know it not, yet because it is possible, we ought no otherwise to deprecate such a procedure against us, than as will consist with that possibility. To

pray otherwise, if we make no mention of his name, is absurd presumption, that we should wish, or imagine, he will prefer any concernments of ours, to the steady order and decorum of his own government. But if we do make mention of it, it is a more absurd hypocrisy, to seem concerned for his name, when we intend only our own external advantages; as if we thought he that could answer our prayers, could not understand them. It is surely very unbecoming creatures, to bear themselves so towards the God that made them.

2. Consider, that to have a sense in our hearts truly agreeable to the proper meaning of this argument, "for thy name's sake," is very suitable to the state of returning creatures, who are gathering themselves back to God out of the common apostacy, wherein all were engaged, and combined against that great Lord and Ruler of the world. In that defection every one did principally mind and set up for himself. Each one would be a God to himself, but all were, by consequence, against God. Whom to be for, they were divided, and of as many minds as there were men. Whom to be against, they were agreed, as if their common Lord was the common enemy; for his interest and theirs were opposite and irreconcilable. They were sunk and lost in sensuality, and had no other interest, than that of their flesh. When man hath made himself a brute, he then thinks himself fittest to be a God. The interest of our souls must unite us with him; that of our flesh engages us against him. Some are through the power of his grace returning. What a pleasure would it be to us to behold ourselves among the *reduces!* those that are upon their return; that are again taking the Lord only to be their God, and his interest for their only interest!

3. Consider that our very name, as we are Christians, obliges us to be of that obedient, happy number. For what is Christianity but the tendency of souls towards God, through the mediation, and under the conduct of Christ! Therefore is the initial precept of it, and the condition of our entrance into that blessed state, self-denial. We answer not our own name, further than as we are revolving, and rolling back, out of our single and separate state, into our original, most natural state, of subordination to God; wherein only we are capable of union with him, and final blessedness in him. This is discipleship to Christ, and the design of the Christian religion, to be subdued in our spirits, and wrought down into compliance with the divine will, to be meek, lowly, humble, patient, ready to take up the cross, to bear any thing, lose any thing, be any thing, or be nothing, that God may be all in all. This is our conformity, not to the precepts only, but to the example too, of our great Lord; who, when he was "in the form of God, and thought it

no robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. ii. 6—8. And hereupon, because he was so entirely devoted to the honour and service of God's great name, ("Father, glorify thy name," summed up his desires,) therefore "God highly exalted him, and gave him a name above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow," &c. *v.* 9, 10. And whenever he shall have a church in the world, that he will think it fit to own with visible, unintermitted favours, it must consist of persons formed according to that pattern. And then, by losing their own name and little interests for God's, they will find all recovered, when their glorious Redeemer shall "write upon them the name of his God, and the name of the city of his God, and his own new name." Rev. iii. 12.

4. Let it be further (in the last place) considered, with what cheerfulness and confidence, we may then pray; when our hearts are wrought to this pitch, that we sincerely design the honour of the divine name, as the most desirable thing; and which name above all things we covet to have glorified. For we are sure of being heard, and to have the same answer which was given our Lord by a voice like that of thunder from heaven, when he prayed, "Father, glorify thy name," (John xii.) "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." Our hearts are not right in us, till we can count this a pleasant, grateful answer. And if we can, we can never fail of it. For we are told, (1 John v. 14,) that "whatsoever we ask according to his will, he heareth us." This will deliver our minds from suspense, when we pray for nothing whereof we are uncertain, but with great deference and submission; and for nothing absolutely, and with greatest engagement of heart, but whereof we are certain. Upon such terms we may pray with great assurance, as Daniel did, "O Lord hear, O Lord forgive; O Lord hearken and do; defer not for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city, and thy people are called by thy name." *ch.* ix. 19. And though an angel be not thereupon sent to tell us, as was to him, "So many weeks are determined upon thy people and thy holy city, (so the matter is expressed; as it were kindly giving back the interest in them to Daniel, with advantage, that he had before acknowledged unto God) to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity," &c. yet we are assured, of what reasonably ought to be as satisfying, that whatsoever shall befall our city, or our people, shall end in the eternal glory of God, and of the city of God.

A SERMON

ON

THE THANKSGIVING DAY,

DECEMBER 2, 1697.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE LORD HAVERSHAM.

I OFFER this discourse, my honoured lord, to your perusal, in confidence that the subject and design of it will be so far grateful to your lordship, as in some degree to atone for the imperfections of the management. I believe it will not offend against your lordship's very accurate judgment of things, that I have not been so swayed by an authority which hath signified much in our age, as to represent the natural state of man, as a state of war; which either must signify man in his original constitution to have been a very ill-natured creature, or must signify his nature to be less ancient than himself. For I cannot doubt, but the author of that maxim would have disdained their way of speaking who by nature mean vice; or to have been guilty of so pious a thought, that God at first made man any better thing than we find him. I shall the less passionately lament my infelicity, in losing the good opinion of men of that sentiment, if I stand right in your lordship's; not knowing any of your rank and figure in the world, with whom I count it a greater honour to agree in judgment, or do less fear to disagree.

In matters of secular concernment, it becomes me not to profess any judgment at all besides the public; unto which, in things of that nature, every private man's ought to be, and is professedly, resigned. Yet within that compass, notwithstanding the just esteem your lordship hath of noble endowments, which do then illustriously shine in the military profession when there is a necessity of their being reduced to practice, I apprehend, that otherwise your lordship hath no more grateful thoughts of war than I; nor more ungrateful of the necessary means of preserving peace. That which is the reproach of human

nature, could never originally belong to it; nor can any thing more expose its ignominious depravation, than it should ever be necessary the sword should dispute right, and the longest decide it.

In the matters of religion, which is every man's business, and whose sphere, as it is higher, must be proportionably wider and more comprehensive; I hope it is your lordship's constant care to add unto clearness and rectitude of thought the pleasantness of taste; and that you apprehend it to consist, not more in a scheme of notions, than of vital principles; and that your love to it proceeds from hence, that you relish it and feel you live by it. You are hereby fortified against the reproach that attends it from their contempt of it who are every day assaulting heaven, and would have the war not ended, but only transferred thitherward. That which some vent, and others admire as wit, even paganism itself has condemned as foolishness. Your lordship is in no more danger to be altered hereby from your chosen course, than a man in his health and senses, by satires against eating and drinking. I reckon your lordship is so much taken up with the great things of religion, as to be less taken with the adventitious things men have thought fit to affix to it. I do not more emulate your lordship in any thing than a disdain of bigotry; nor more honour any thing I discern in you than true catholicism. And, recounting what things and persons do truly belong to a church, I believe your lordship is not professedly of a larger church, as counting it too large for you, but too narrow; and that you affect not to be of a self-distinguished party. Nor, besides the opportunity of avowing the just honour and obligations I have to your lordship and your noble consort, with my sincere concern for your hopeful and numerous offspring, did any thing more invite this address to your lordship, than the agreeableness of such your sentiments, to the mind and spirit of,

My most honoured lord,

Your lordship's most justly devoted, and

Most faithful, humble servant,

JOHN HOWE.

A SERMON

ON

THE THANKSGIVING DAY,

DECEMBER 2, 1697.

Psalm xxix. 11.

The Lord will bless his people with peace.—The whole verse is, *The Lord will give strength to his people, the Lord will bless his people with peace.*

You so generally know the occasion of this our solemn assembly at this time, that none can be in doubt concerning the suitableness of this portion of Scripture for our present consideration. Our business is to celebrate the divine goodness, in preserving our king abroad, and restoring him home in safety, after he had been the happy instrument of bringing about that peace, which puts a period to a long-continued, wasting, and dubious war; under which we, and all Europe, have groaned these divers years. And if we find the favourable workings of Providence to concur and fall in with a divine word, pointing them to God's own people; as this for instance, "the Lord will bless his people with peace;" *i.e.* he will vouchsafe this blessing to his own people in the fittest season, as it must be understood; this adds so much the more grateful and pleasant relish to the mercy we are this day to acknowledge. It cannot but do so with right minds, unto which nothing is more agreeable than to desire and covet such favour as God shows to his own people; and to be made glad with his inheritance, (Ps. cvi. 4, 5,) from an apprehension that there must be somewhat very peculiar in such mercy as God vouchsafes to his own, to a people peculiar and select, severed and set apart for himself from the rest of men. It is true, indeed, that peace, abstractly considered, is neither the appropriate nor the constant privilege of such a people; they neither alone enjoy it, nor at all times, when it is brought about even for them; they have other partakers: but yet, such favours of Providence as are of larger extent, and reach to many besides God's own people, have a more peculiar, benign aspect upon

them; and are attended, with reference to them, with such consequences, as wherein others, without being made of this people of his, are not sharers with them. Some intimation there is of this in this psalm, which the title speaks a psalm of David; and which some think to refer unto the wars managed by him in his time with the Moabites, signified by the wilderness of Kadesh; and the Syrians, signified by the cedars of Lebanon, of whom he speaks in the prophetic style, as if, by the terrible and amazing appearances of God's power against them, they were thunderstruck, like the trees of a forest, or as the hinds that are wont to inhabit amongst them. And so it is concluded, and shut up with this Epiphonema in the end of the psalm, "the Lord will give strength to his people, the Lord will bless his people with peace;" *i.e.* he is in war their strength, and their felicity in peace; in war, he is the Author of all that power wherewith they are enabled to oppose and overcome potent enemies; and in peace, he is their truly felicitating good, and makes them, by his own vouchsafed presence, a truly blessed people.

It is the latter of these, peace, unto which the present occasion confines us. And concerning that, we might, in the first place, note from the text, that wheresoever it is brought about, God is the author of it. "God will bless his people with peace." That title which the Scripture gives him, "the God of peace," with the many expressions of like import wherewith it abounds, can leave them in no doubt concerning the divine influence and agency in bringing about the grateful intervals of peace, after desolating, bloody wars, who have any reverence for the sacred oracles. And, indeed, to insist upon such a subject as this, in a case so plain, so acknowledged amongst men who believe the Bible, were to reproach the auditory, as if it were made up of sceptics and atheists, or of them that did not believe this world was made by God, or that it was made by him only by some casual stroke and without design; that he cared not for his reasonable, intelligent creatures when he had made them, what became of them, nor did at all concern himself in their most considerable concernments. I shall not, therefore, insist upon this, which seems rather slid in, and supposed in the text, or taken for granted; for among a people in visible relation and subjection to God, it had been as great an incongruity industriously to assert and prove such a thing, as it would be by an elaborate discourse to prove that there is a sun in the firmament, unto men that continually partake and enjoy his light and influences; and to whose sense, the vicissitudes and distinctions of day and night, by his presence and absence, are brought under constant notice every twenty-four hours. I shall therefore, I say, pass on to what appears more directly to be the design of

the text, and that seems to be twofold: first, to represent to us in general the great blessing of peace, wherein, when God sees it fit, he is pleased to make his own people partakers with others; secondly, because it is not without design that it is said, he will bless *his people* with peace, unto whom it is plain this alone is not an appropriate privilege; it seems further designed to intimate, and couch in, the concurrence and concomitancy of such things, as, superadded to peace, will make it a complete blessing. "The Lord will bless his people with peace." He will give them peace so and upon such terms, and with such concomitants and consequences, that to them it shall prove a real and a full blessing. These two things, therefore, I intend to insist upon—To show you how valuable a good and (in the large and common sense) a blessing peace is, as it stands in opposition to bloody and desolating wars. And then—I shall show you, what additions and concomitants are necessary to make it a complete blessing, such as may be appropriate and peculiar to God's own people: and so make use of the whole.

I. I shall show you, briefly, how valuable a good peace is in itself, as it stands opposed unto bloody and destructive wars. And this will best be seen, by stating and viewing it in that opposition, and by representing to you somewhat of the horror of war; which we may do by viewing it in its causes, in itself, and in its dismal consequences, wherewith it is wont to be attended. Consider it in its *causes;* and they are principally these two, the wickedness of men, and the just vengeance of God thereupon. These two concurring, and falling in together, must be understood to be the causes of so great a calamity among men in this world; and I shall only consider these two in their complication, and not speak to them distinctly and separately. Very plain it is, that war is a mark of the apostacy, and stigmatizes man as fallen from God, in a degenerate revolted state; it is the horrid issue of men's having forsaken God, and of their being abandoned by him to the hurry of their own furious lusts and passions; the natural and the penal effect of their having severed themselves and broke loose from the divine government. "From whence are wars? Are they not from your lusts?" Jas. iv. 1.—God most justly punishes men's injustice, not by infusing malignity, which he needs not, into their minds and natures; and which it is impossible he can be the Author of, whose very nature itself is goodness, and purity, and love; but having forsaken him, rebelled against him, disclaimed him as their Ruler, refused any longer to be subject to him, they are forsaken of him, and left to take vengeance for it on one another; of which there cannot be a greater instance, than that when controversies do arise between men and men, between nation and nation, kingdom and kingdom, one people and another, it is

presently to be decided by a bloody sword. This speaks a monstrous degeneracy in the intellectual world, and from the original rectitude that belongs to the nature of man, which in his primitive state did stand in a temperament of reason and love. That there should be differences about *meum* and *tuum* in a creature of that constitution, is itself a horrid thing; but then that such differences are to be determined only by violence, that presently they must hereupon run into war! Good God! what an indication is this, that reason, wisdom, justice, and love, are fled from this earth! And it speaks rebellion against God in the highest kind, it is a subversion of the most fundamental law of his kingdom over the intelligent world! "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy might; and thy neighbour as thyself."

It is impossible there should be any such thing as war in the world, but by the violation of this most fundamental divine law; the principal and most important thing that his government does as it were consist in over reasonable creatures, their loving him above all, and one another as themselves. This law observed must make this earth another heaven; this law violated and broken, makes it another hell. Men being fallen from God, and having lost their acquaintance with him, and all relish of divine things, think to repair their loss out of this sensible world, whereof no man thinks he hath enough; desire of more blinds their eyes, that they cannot judge of right and wrong. Hence every man's cause is right in his own eyes, appetite is the only measure they judge by; and power (whatsoever of it any one can grasp) the instrument by which they execute their perverse judgment. A dismal spectacle and subject of contemplation to the inhabitants of the purer, and more peaceful regions! To behold a divine offspring, the sons of God, now transformed into sons of the earth, and tearing in pieces one another, for what some possess, and others covet! Yea, and to a calm uninterested spectator on our own globe, this can be no grateful prospect, to view the history of all times and nations, and take notice how full it is of such tragedy: countries from age to age made aceldamas, fields of blood, on this account of extending or confining empire and dominion; of invading another's, or defending one's own. But hereupon it is not strange when a world of intelligent, reasonable creatures are thus gone off from God, and in rebellion against him in the most fundamental part of his government, that he suffers them to be the executioners of his just wrath upon one another. And if we thus look upon war, first, in this its complicated causes, it is the opprobrium, the reproach of human nature, of intelligent, reasonable creatures.

But next look upon it *in itself*, and what is it but the destruction of human lives, of creatures made after the image of God; of whom he has so high a value, and whose lives, even for that very reason, he is pleased to fence and secure by a severe law; "whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man?" But here is a formed design of destroying human lives by multitudes, lives of creatures bearing the image of God. And by how much the more necessary this is in many cases, so much the more grievous and calamitous a thing it is, that when to cut off and destroy by multitudes so precious things as human lives, is tragical and horrid, not to do it is so much worse! Yea, that war itself is become an art, and that the valour and skill which belong to it are laudable excellencies, is all aggravation of the sadness of this case.

And if we do consider the *consequences and effects* which do ensue upon such war, how full of horror and frightfulness are they; and those most of all that are least of all thought on, and that lie most out of view;—for, besides that property is gone, and no man knows what to call his own, laws lose their force, magistrates their authority and reverence, civil government is disobeyed and despised, common order is violated and turned into confusion, families torn in pieces, countries laid waste and desolate, towns and cities sacked, ravaged and made ruinous heaps:—besides all this, (I say) the sacred rites and mysteries of religion are neglected and profaned, its holy solemnities interrupted, worshipping assemblies are broken up. Men have little opportunity left them to mind their great concerns with God, and for another world; care for immortal souls, when it is most necessary, is thrown out of doors; and reasonable creatures that should be employed adoring and worshipping their great Creator, the God of their lives, are employed in designing the mutual destruction of one another's lives; and it may be, that is least considered which carries the most horror in it, that multitudes are hurried down to perdition, neither dreaded by themselves, nor apprehended by the destroyer; souls are passing in shoals into eternity, they not considering it who are sent nor they that send them! And what sport doth this make for devils, those envious, apostate spirits, that first drew men into a like apostacy! that when God had given this earth to the children of men, assigning to themselves a worse abode amidst infernal darkness and flames, they should be tearing one another in pieces about this their portion under the sun, making God's bounty to them the occasion of their doing all manner of violence to one another! That the prince of the apostacy, the usurping god of this world, should have the opportunity of beholding man, sometime by divine grant the

Lord of it, now its slave and his captive by it; led by him at his will into whatsoever is most repugnant to the will and the very nature of his Maker! That whereas he was at first made after God's own image, a Godlike creature, resembling his Maker especially in spirituality, and love, he now more resembles in sensuality beasts, and in malignity devils, and both by an inordinate love of this world; the friendship whereof, and a mind carnalized by it, is enmity against God, (James iv. 4, Rom. viii. 7,) and whereof also because every man thinks his own share too little, he becomes any one's enemy that hath more of it than himself.

And thus have devils the pleasure of tormenting men, by the very gift and expression of God's love and kindness to them, transformed into enmity, and hatred of himself and one another; forsaken of him, and destroying each other; and hastening once more into their horrid society, that as they were accomplices with them in their first rebellion, they may be partakers and associates with them in woe and torment. The most dismal part of the story is that which lies most out of sight. Now let all this be considered and put together, and surely peace is a valuable thing; it speaks man in some degree returned to himself, and in a right mind, when he can agree and be content to let another live quiet and unmolested by him, one man another man, and one nation another nation. Thus far does peace appear a blessing apart and by itself, a valuable good; and according to the common notion and estimate, it may be called a blessing wherewith God blesses his people in common with others. But we are further to consider—

II. What things are requisite to make this a real, and a complete blessing, capable of being appropriated unto God's own peculiar people; which seems also to be intended here. "The Lord will bless his people with peace." In speaking to this I shall do these two things. Mention the requisites themselves and—Show their requisiteness: or show what is requisite to make external peace a real and peculiar blessing,—and then show you upon what account the condition and circumstancy of such things are requisite.

First. I shall show you the things that are requisite.

1. Such peace as we have been hitherto speaking of is then truly a blessing, when there is, in conjunction with it, a very copious effusion of the Spirit of God; in such a concomitancy, peace will make a people a blessed people. When, after such a calamitous dispensation was over and at an end, as we read of, Ezek. xxxix., wherein (v. 23,) God is said to hide his face, and many of his people were carried into captivity, and many fell by the sword,—it comes at length to this, he will no more hide his face, or cover it with so ireful and gloomy aspects and appear-

ances that it cannot be comfortably beheld. It is for this very reason, because he pours forth his Spirit upon the whole house of Israel, as it is in *v.* 29 of that chapter; pouring forth signifies a copious communication; and if the Spirit of God be copiously communicated, the best of blessings are in great abundance contained in it; which will infer, or countervail, whatsoever is valuable or needful besides to make the state of such a people a blessed state.

2. It will be so, when the gospel of peace has its free course, and a large spread in the world: when, in conjunction with beating of swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks, the law goes forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and nations shall say, "Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord, and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his statutes;" as in that of Micah iv. 2, 3. And—

3. When, according to the dictate of divine wisdom, kings do reign (as Prov. viii. 15,) and princes decree justice; when God's people have judges as at the first, counsellors as at the beginning, (Isa. i. 26,) able men, men of truth, fearing God, and hating covetousness, (Exod. xviii. 21;) when he is pleased to set kings on the throne that scatter the wicked with their eyes, and so to establish the throne in righteousness; when there is a design, driven by those that bear the civil sword, the sword of justice, to be "a terror to evil-doers, but a praise to them that do well;" so as it may be said upon this account, they are the ministers of God for good, whom he has been pleased to set in such stations.

4. When God gives pastors after his own heart, that are able, and do make it their business, to feed his people with knowledge and understanding. When he inspirits such to cry mightily, to warn men off from sin; when watchmen, set over his people, are faithful in the business of their station, at once both to save their people, and themselves from having their blood required at the hands of either; this will make a peaceful state, a happy state; it will contribute a great deal towards it. And again, when hereupon in the—

5th place, wickedness languishes, the lusts of men droop and wither; there is some visible restraint, if there be not a universal mortification of such fruits of the flesh, as those that are spoken of Gal. v. 19; "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like," that are inconsistent with a share in the inheritance of the kingdom of God, as it after follows. This does much to the making a peaceful state of things, a blessed state; it takes away much of the occasion of further controversy between God and such a people. But—

6. When there is a very great diffusion of a holy new nature, which carries the matter higher, and is a great addition, though in certain conjunction with the former; as it is when the lusts and works of the flesh do cease to be reigning and rampant among them who live under the gospel, through the victorious and more powerful operation of the Spirit of grace breathing in it. For then by the influence of the same Spirit, not only such vicious inclinations are plucked up by the roots, as certainly withstand a people's felicity; but such positive principles are implanted, as tend to promote it. Yet since this conjunction is not constant, but such insolences of wickedness as more directly tend to make a people miserable may be repressed by inferior causes, I therefore more expressly add, that then peace may be reckoned a certain and a full blessing, when with it we behold a divine offspring continually rising up, of men appearing to be born of God, and to have received a Godlike nature; apt to do good, and become blessings to the world: when there is a rising generation of such, not proselyted to this or that party, but to real, substantial godliness and Christianity:—when multitudes are thus turned unto the Lord; when there are numerous conversions, a new creation is springing up in visible and multiplied instances, so as that holiness comes to be both an extensive and illustrious thing:—when multitude comes to give reputation to serious religion, when it is no longer a reproach to be a visible fearer of God, because generally men are so: when it is looked upon as no fashionable thing to be a despiser of God and heaven, and to breathe out contempt of the divine power that gave us breath. And—

7. When hereupon, the divine government obtains, and takes place in the minds and consciences of men; when his authority is owned with reverential submission; then God does bless a people when his fear spreads far and near; "God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him;" as in that Ps. lxvii. the latter end. And again,—

8. When there is a manifest power and prevalency of divine love amongst men, that bear the same name of Christians; when that peace of God rules in their hearts, unto which they are all called in one body: when they observedly "keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace;" when they have peace one towards another, so as that it may be seen that they are all the sons of peace, the children of the same Father, who has conveyed it into them, as part of that divine nature which he communicates to the regenerate seed; when there is a natural propensity to one another, that they can no more violate and tear that vital bond of love and peace that is among them, than they can endure to tear their own flesh, or pluck out their own eyes: when peace among Christians appears to be a connatural thing,

not the product of conveniency and prudential considerations only, but a nature which none can more endure to counteract, than to offer violence to themselves; a thing which nature admits not, whose laws never allow it to act against itself. And—

9. When, upon all this, God appears to be reconciled unto such a people; for in his favour is life. When all these things do concur, as so many indications of his being at peace with them, *i. e.* that he has entirely forgiven them all former offences, that their sins and iniquities he remembers no more; and these concur with such things as partly make, and partly argue them, the objects of his delight, that he has written his law in their hearts, he has put his Spirit into them, he has made them a company of Godlike creatures like himself, whose very nature is love; they are his living resemblances in that very respect, expressing herein his virtues, who has "called them out of darkness into his own glorious and marvellous light:" hereupon such a people may reckon themselves secure of God's own presence; he is in the midst of them, and his glory ceases to hover, becomes with them a fixed thing, settles its station, as not about to discontinue or remove; their land may now be called the land of Immanuel, and bears the inscription, "God with us;" the tabernacle of God is with them, and he is resolved to dwell with them and be their God, and avow them before all the world for his peculiar people. After the many things that do concur together in an inferior kind, as the concomitants of a merely external peace, as that their sons grow up as plants, their daughters are so many polished corner stones, that join together the walls of a palace, that their garners be full, their sheep numerous, their oxen strong, and that there be no complaining in their streets; after all these things it is subjoined, "yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord;" all the forementioned things, alone, will never make a blessing worthy of a people peculiar to God. But when it can be said that the Lord is their God, they are a happy people indeed. Ps. cxliv. 12, 15. Such as these are the things requisite to make peace a complete blessing. But now we are,—

Secondly. To show you the requisiteness of the concurrence and concomitancy of such things, to the mentioned purpose; or how it may appear, that such things as these are necessary to complete this blessing, or to make it a truly valuable, or a special blessing. In order hereto note,—

1. That there is such a thing as a special blessing, very distinguishable from such blessings as are merely common. We read of one Jabez, (1 Chron. iv. 9, 10,) said to be more honourable than his brethren; and somewhat very remarkable, (as we are to reckon, when to the divine wisdom it was thought fit to be inserted amidst a genealogical discourse) is further said of

him, *viz.* that he "called to the God of Israel, saying, O that that thou wouldest bless me indeed," &c. and it is added, "God granted what he requested." It seems, besides what goes under the common notion of blessing, he reckoned there was somewhat more peculiar, which he calls blessing indeed. There is a known Hebraism in that expression; what we read, "bless me indeed," is "bless me in blessing me;" *q. d.* let me have a blessing within a blessing; let me have that blessing whereof the other is but a cortex, the outside; let me have that blessing that is wrapt up and inclosed in the external blessing. And because it is said "and God granted his request," we have reason to understand it was somewhat very peculiar that God vouchsafed unto him; and that account which some give us has a look that way, that God vouchsafed him somewhat more extraordinary in the kind of mental and intellectual endowments: for we are otherwise informed, that this Jabez became a noted doctor among the Jews, and that the city, called after his name, was thereupon afterwards the residence of such as were most learned in their laws. *Vatabl. apud Critic.* That is to be blessed indeed, to have these things conferred, that do reach the mind and affect the inner man; to be blessed with spiritual blessings from the heavenly places, as in that Eph. i. 3. There is a spiritual sort of blessing that may be enclosed in the external blessing, and particularly in this of peace, which, while it is common to the people of God with other men, is itself not common.

2. I further note, that the things I have mentioned to you, they are of that special kind, they are either immediate spiritual blessings, or subservient to such; whereupon now we may, from several considerations, evince to you that without them such an external good, as this of peace, is not a complete blessing.

(1.) It is no argument of God's special favour. The best and most valuable blessings are from the Εὐδοκία θελήματος, "the good pleasure of his will." Eph. i. 3—5. Other men may enjoy external benefits, may both prosper in war, and flourish in peace, as well, and often more than God's own people. You read of a time, wherein the whole earth is said to be at rest and quiet. Isa. xiv. 7. Therefore mere peace is no mark of special divine favour, and so is not, abstractly considered, a complete blessing, not a self-desirable thing.

(2.) Men are not made by it the better men. They may enjoy peace, and being carnal-minded men before, may still continue so; as great strangers to God as they were, as vain and sensual, as profligate and licentious, as useless in the world, as mischievous, every way as ill men as ever. And,—

(3.) They may, by mere external peace, become so much the worse men; that may be an occasion to them of their growing worse and worse; "the prosperity of fools (*i. e.* of wicked men)

slays and destroys them." Prov. i. 32. It is an observation that runs through the course of time, that as wars at length beget an enforced peace, so peace infers free trade and commerce, and that plenty, and that pride and wantonness; so these run us back in an easy but unhappy circle, to be as we were, in war again. And if that prove not the present or the speedy consequence, that ensues which is worse than war; unless God vouchsafe that other sort of blessing, which will influence and better men's minds. Vice springs up in the more fattened soil; men's lusts will soon prove more oppressive tyrants than they can have freed themselves from by the most just and most prosperous war, and will subdue them to a far viler and more ignoble servitude. An ingenious writer of those affairs observes, that the former Scipio opened the way to the Roman power, the latter to their luxury; their virtue languished, and they were conquered by their own vices, who before could conquer the world. That noted moralist says, *Infirmi est animi non posse pati divitias*, "it is a weak mind that cannot bear a prosperous condition;" but where are there minds strong enough to bear it, if they be not blessed from above with somewhat better than that prosperity itself?

(4.) Men may, notwithstanding mere external peace, be as miserable in this and in the other world, as if they had never known it; and much more, if by it they have been the more wicked. I beseech you, consider, are they a blessed people, or is that a blessed man, between whom and eternal misery there is but a breath? He may but breathe another breath, and be in the midst of flames; is he happy this moment, that may be as miserable as any devil the next? Those things can only be complete blessings to any, that are inseparable ones, and that will make them for ever blessed. For me to have but such a blessing as does not make me blessed; what an unblessed blessing is this! A philosopher can tell you, blessedness cannot be a thing separable from itself; not a χωριστόν τι, *Arist.*; it can much less be such a thing as may leave me miserable to all eternity, least of all what may make me so, by degenerating into a curse, as Malachi ii. 2. Therefore these are demonstrations, that mere external peace, without such additions as you have heard of, can never be a complete blessing, nor such as can be understood vouchsafed to the people of God as their ultimate and consummative felicity. It must in the meantime be acknowledged, that as a people may belong to God externally, more than another people; and may sometime be externally more reformed, than at other times; so peace, with other external good things, may thereupon be afforded them, as less expressive marks of God's favour, and approbation of their more regular course: and, by the tenor of God's particular covenant

with the people of Israel, might more certainly be expected so to be. Yet this is a state wherein it is not reasonable, or safe for any finally to acquiesce.

III. I therefore now come to the promised use, which will correspond to the two general heads I have been discoursing of: to let you see—what cause of thanksgiving we have in reference to the former, the blessing of peace abstractly considered, and—what cause of supplication we have in reference to the latter, the additions that are requisite to make it a complete blessing.

First. As to the former. Since peace is so valuable a thing considered apart, as you have heard it is, this points out to us the matter of thanksgiving, for which this day is appointed; that God has preserved our king amidst so innumerable dangers abroad; that he has brought him home to us in safety; that he has made him the instrument of that peace that we find is at length brought about, wherein he is returned to us a greater conqueror than if he had routed and destroyed never so potent armies of our enemies in the field. We have reason to understand the matter so. By prevailing in war, he had only conquered by force; by prevailing for peace, he has conquered by wisdom and goodness. By prevailing in war, he had only conquered the bodily power of our enemies, or their baser part; by prevailing for peace, he has conquered their minds. By prevailing in war, he had brought about the good only of one side; by prevailing for peace, he has brought about the real benefit of both sides, a far more diffusive blessing. By prevailing in war, he had conquered enemies; by prevailing for peace, he has conquered enmity itself. By prevailing in war, he had overcome other men; but in prevailing for peace, considering his martial spirit, and his high provocations, he has done a far greater thing; he has conquered himself, whom none ever conquered before. Besides what this great blessing of peace generally considered contains in itself, we ought to amplify it to ourselves; being brought about by such means, wherein we have so particular a concern. This ought to add with us a very grateful relish to it, for it is a glory to our nation that God has set a prince on the English throne that could signify so much to the world: the beams of that glory God hath cast on him, reflect and shine upon his people: to be made the head among other nations, and not the tail, God hath in his word taught us not to count it an inconsiderable thing. And it is our more peculiar glory that our king is renowned, not by throwing death and destruction every where round about him, but by spreading the benefits included in peace through the neighbouring nations; and his return to us, leaving the rest of Europe only to lament that they all live not under his government. I pray God he may meet

with no ungrateful returns: and that none may be so ill-minded as to grudge at power so lodged as to save us, who were less concerned at its being lodged where it could only be designed to destroy us. In the meantime, it might excite us to the higher pitches of thankfulness to Almighty God for this blessing of the present peace, if we did consider—both what it hath cost, and—whereto it is improveable. But the former consideration I shall not insist upon, lest any should make an undue use of it; and the latter I leave to the following head which we are next to proceed to,—

Secondly. To show what matter of supplication remains to us, upon the latter account; that is, with reference to such things as are yet wanting to make this blessing of peace a complete blessing, and without which it cannot be understood to be such; but we may be left at last a most miserable people, and so much the more miserable by how much the higher favours we have to account for, that not being improved must have been thrown away upon us. The mercies included in the peace, will be unimproved and lost, without the mentioned additions; whereof all the several heads that were recited belong to one, *viz.* that of spiritual blessing. That therefore, in the general, we have to pray for, that God may be said to bless us indeed, to bless us in blessing us; *viz.* that he would "bless us with spiritual blessings, in the heavenlies (*i. e.* in heavenly things, or from the heavenly places) in Christ Jesus," as Eph. i. 3. Let us, I pray you, learn to distinguish between a self-desirable good, that in its own nature is such, so immutably and invariably that it can never degenerate, or cease to be such; and what is only such by accident, and in some circumstances may be much otherwise. Spiritual good, that of the mind and spirit, and which makes that better, especially that which accompanies salvation, (Heb. vi. 9,) that runs into eternity, and goes with us into the other world, is of the former sort. External good is but *res media*, capable of being to us sometimes good, and sometimes evil, as the case may alter. Blessings of this kind may become curses, (Mal. ii. 2,) "I will curse your blessings, yea, I have cursed them already." A man's table may become his snare, and that which was for his welfare, a trap. Ps. lxix. 22. Merely external blessings are curses, when they become the fuel of lusts, when they animate men unto contests against heaven, rebellions against the divine government; when, like Jeshurun, men wax fat by them, and kick against heaven, (Deut. xxxii.;) this we are always liable to till spiritual blessings intermingle with our other blessings; and nothing should more convince the world that the kindest and most benign part of the divine government lies in immediate influences on the minds of men; and that consequently their own felicity depends thereon. Let

all things that can be imagined concur in the kind of external good, and they can never make him a happy man, that has an ill mind; he will always be his own hell, and carry that about with him wheresoever he goes; he will be a constant spring and fountain of misery to himself, misery and he cannot be separated from one another: "there is no peace to the wicked, saith my God;" but he will be always "a troubled sea, whose waters cast forth mire and dirt." Isa. lvii. 20, 21. The philosophy of pagans would have made them ashamed to place their felicity in any thing without, or foreign to themselves.

But we are Christians, and shall we not much more be ashamed to take other, or even opposite measures of blessedness, to those which are given us by our divine Master? To be poor in spirit, upon just accounts mourners, meek, hungry and thirsty after righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peace-makers, to submit to be persecuted for righteousness' sake, these are his characters of a blessed man; and he places that blessedness itself in congenerous things. Matt. v. 3—5, &c. Let us learn from him, and collect that nothing but wickedness can make us miserable. What an overflowing deluge have we in view! tending to subvert our religion and our civil state together! nor have we another effectual remedy in view, but the Spirit of God, if he will vouchsafe to pour it forth. The great enemy of mankind is come in upon us like a flood, and only the Spirit of the Lord can lift up a standard against him. Isa. lix. 19. The Spirit of the Lord would be to us as a purifying flame, to burn up our filthiness, and enkindle in us that divine love that would make us zealous of good works. And this should be with us the matter of earnest and incessant supplication; not with diffidence, for "he will give his Spirit to them that ask him," (Luke xi. 13;) not with diminishing thoughts of the necessity, and value of the gift;—take heed of that, for that were to be miserable and undone by a principle; to be misled, by a profane, false judgment, into the contempt of the most highly valuable things, that are most necessary to our true welfare; and which are all contained in the gift of the Spirit, as you may see by comparing Matt. vii. and Luke xi. with one another. In the one place it is said, "he will give good things to them that ask him;" in the other place it is said, "his Spirit;" implying, that the gift of the Spirit involves in it all good things. And certainly, nothing can be good to any man till he hath that Spirit, that makes him good; and we are greatly concerned to supplicate mightily for the effusion of that blessed Spirit, for these two purposes especially. First, that there may be a larger diffusion amongst us of vital religion, whereby we shall be at peace with God:—Secondly, that Christian love may more abound; whereby Christians may be composed to mutual peace, and more disposed to mutual communion with one another.

1. That there may be a larger diffusion of vital religion, wherein stands indeed their being at peace with God; when there is a mutual amplexus between him and them, mind touching mind, and spirit spirit; when he does, by his Spirit embrace the spirits of men, and infuse light and life into them, and adapt and suit them for his communion. To this purpose, we have great cause to beg and supplicate earnestly for a greater pouring forth of his Spirit, that this living religion may spread amongst us; for we appear to be under a doom, while it does not so, that "seeing we should see, and not perceive," &c. Isa. vi. O the fearful guilt incurred, one Lord's day after another! When great assemblies meet together, multitudes are besought and supplicated that they would be reconciled to God, but too few listen; peace with God seems not a valuable thing with us; his favour, in which is life, is little set by: when with many a one a treaty is continued, in order to peace, through many years, seven, ten, twenty, thirty, nay forty years, and yet this treaty brings not about a peace at last; but they stand out still hardened in their impenitency, infidelity, obstinacy, enmity against God and his Christ, through the power and dominion that an earthly, vain, carnal mind has in them, and over them; what can our peace with men signify in this case? What, do we not know that the friendship of this world is enmity against God? James iv. 4; 1 John ii. 15; and that it is as impossible for a man to be a sincere lover of God, and an over-intense lover of this world as to have two Gods; *i.e.* two supreme powers to govern him, two supreme goods to satisfy him? This must breed a perpetual war, till the case alters between thee and him that made thee; and woe to him that strives with his Maker. To have the wrath of God, armed with omnipotency, engaged against thee; and yet that thou shouldst not covet peace, that yet thou shouldst not cry for peace! To have the peace-making blood of thy Redeemer crying to thee, "O be at peace with God!" to have him that shed it, thus bespeaking thee, I am ready to do the part of a day's-man, I have died upon the cross that I might do so, that I might effect, and bring about a peace between God and thee; I am ready to mediate, make use of me; I will undertake on God's part, that he shall pardon thee, that he shall forgive thee, and let the controversy fall, if yet thy heart on thy part will yield, melt, and relent, and thou cry for mercy!" He came with this design into this world; the proclamation of angels at his coming spake his design; "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, and good-will towards men." Shall not all this be believed? or shall men pretend to believe it, and not consider it, or not look upon it as a considerable thing?

2. And there is as much need, too, that we supplicate for this Spirit, as a Spirit of mutual love among Christians, to reconcile them to one another: which, indeed, is also but to Christianize them, to make vital religion take place with them; for that same Spirit of Christ which animates his body, and makes them his living members, makes them such to one another. And the matter speaks itself; that opposite spirit unto truly Christian peace and love, which appears amongst us, nothing but the Spirit of Christ can overcome; we are not to expect a cure of our distempers in this kind, but by the pouring forth of this blessed Spirit. And if there be not a cure, we are certainly to expect the pouring forth of his wrath; and things look with a threatening aspect upon us to this purpose. Now that opportunity is so inviting, God's call so loud, and the way so plain; that yet an indisposition to peace should be so obstinate, that breaches should be kept open by trifles, and unaccountable things of which no man of sense can pretend to give an account; that there is strife too manifestly not from the love of truth, whereof not one hair needs be lost, (nor of any other valuable thing) but merely from the love of strife; when as to the most material and important truths men are agreed, but would seem to disagree; they mean the same things, but impute to one another a different meaning; and pretend to know the others' mind better than themselves, that on that pretence they may quarrel with them: all this looks fatally. And our unjust angers at one another are too expressive of God's just anger with us all; that his good Spirit, that Spirit of love, peace, kindness, benignity is so notoriously resisted, vexed, grieved, and despited by us. And the consequences are likely for some time to be very dismal; though when God hath proceeded in a way of punitive animadversion, so far as he shall judge necessary for the vindication of his own name, and the honour of our religion so scandalously misrepresented to the world, it will be easy for him by one victorious effort of that Spirit to reduce the Christian church to its original genuine temper, and make it shine again in its own native light and lustre. But, in the meantime, I cannot see that there is greater need of an overpowering influence of the Holy Ghost to draw men into union with Christ, and thereby to bring back apostate souls to God, or to work in them faith and repentance; than to bring them into union upon Christian terms with one another: or that the love of this world, or any the most ignominious sensual lust, or vice (drunkenness, gluttony, or any other,) are more hardly, or more rarely overcome, than the envy, wrath, malice, which Christians ordinarily are not at all shy of expressing toward one another.

I speak upon some experience, lamenting that having this occasion, (which sense of duty will not let me balk,) I have also

so much cause to mention that foregoing observation. For I cannot forget, that sometime discoursing with some very noted persons, about the business of union among Christians, it hath been freely granted me that there was not so much as a principle left (among those the discourse had reference to) upon which to disagree; and yet the same fixed aversion to union continued as before, as a plain proof they were not principles but ends we were still to differ for. In this case, what but the power of an Almighty Spirit can overcome? To quote texts of Scripture upon such occasions signifies nothing, even to those who profess a veneration for those holy oracles of God. Let such places be mentioned as are expressly directed against division, wrath, strife, slandering, or backbiting one another, and they avail no more than if the vice were the virtue, or the virtue the vice; no more than if it were a command to Christians to malign, to traduce, to backbite one another. To urge so plain and numerous Scriptures, in these cases, it is to as little purpose as to oppose one's breath to a storm; it is the same thing as if all Scriptures, that had any aspect or look this way, were quite put out of the canon; and all this, with men zealous for the divine authority of the Scripture: and indeed it is come to that pass, as to look like a jest to expect that any man should be swayed by Scripture, or the most convincing reason agreeable thereto, against his own passions, or humour; or against the supposed, though never so grossly mistaken, interest of his party.

Nor is it mere peace that is to be aimed at, but free, mutual Christian communion, with such as do all hold the head, Christ. As peace between nations, infers commerce; so, among Christian churches, it ought to infer a fellowship in acts of worship. I wish there were no cause to say this is declined, when no pretence is left against it but false accusation; none but what must be supported by lying and calumny. Too many are busy at inventing of that which is no where to be found, that exists not in the nature of things, that they may have a colour for continued distance. And is not this to fly in the face of the authority under which we live, *i. e.* the ruling power of the kingdom of Christ, the Prince of Peace? It is strange they are not ashamed to be called Christians, that they do not discard and abandon the name, that can allow themselves in such things! And it is here to be noted, that it is quite another thing, what is in itself true or false, right or wrong; and what is to be a measure or boundary of Christian communion. Are we yet to learn that Christian communion is not amongst men that are perfect, but that are labouring under manifold imperfections, both in knowledge and holiness? and whatsoever mistake in judgment, or obliquity in practice, can consist with holding the Head, ought

to consist also with being of the same Christian communion; not the same locally, which is impossible, but the same occasionally, as any providence invites at this or that time, and mentally in heart and spirit at all times. And to such peace, (and consequently communion) we are all called in one body. Col. iii. 15. We are expressly required to receive one another, (which cannot but mean into each other's communion) and "not to doubtful disputations." Rom. xiv. 1. If any man be thought to be weak, and thereupon to differ from us in some other sentiments, if the difference consist with holding the Head, they are not, because they are weak, to be refused communion, but received; and received because the Lord has received them. (*v.* 3.) All that we should think Christ has received into his communion, we ought to receive into ours. Rom. xv. 7. Scriptures are so express to this purpose that nothing can be more. And, indeed, to make new boundaries of Christian communion is to make a new Christianity, and a new gospel, and new rules of Christ's kingdom, and by which to distinguish subjects and rebels, and in effect to dethrone him, to rival him in his highest prerogative; *viz.* the establishing the terms of life and death, for men living under his gospel. It is to confine salvation, in the means of it, to such or such a party, such a church, arbitrarily distinguished from the rest of Christians:—as if the privileges of his kingdom belonged to a part only; and that, for instance, the Lord's table were to lose its name, and be no longer so called, but the table of this or that church, constituted by rules of their own devising. For if it be the Lord's table, they are to keep it free to be approached upon the Lord's terms, and not their own. In the mean time, what higher invasion can there be of Christ's rights? And since the Christian church became so over wise above what is written, in framing new doctrines, and rules of worship; how miserably it hath languished, and been torn in pieces, they cannot be ignorant who have read any thing of the history of it.

And indeed there is not a difference to be found, amongst them that hold the Head, but must be so minute, that it cannot be a pretence for refusing communion: for true Christian charity will, at least, resolve it into weakness. And men are generally so kind to themselves, that he from whom another differs, will be very apt to think himself the stronger; then does the rule conclude him, you that are strong bear the infirmities of the weak, and do not dispute with them, but receive them. This obligation immediately lies on the strong, and therefore must take hold of them that think themselves so, not to dispute with the others, but receive them; because the Lord has received them. Does he take them into his communion, and will not you take them into yours? To profess want of charity in ex-

cuse, is to excuse a fault by a wickedness; it is to usurp Christ's judgment-seat, and invade his office. Rom. xiv. 4, 10. Therefore, wheresoever there is any such case to be found, that let a man be never so sound in the faith, never so orthodox, let him be in all things else never so regular through his whole conversation, if he do not submit to some doubtful thing, thought perhaps a matter of indifferency on the one side, and unlawful on the other; this person must be excluded Christian communion for no other known pretence, but only that he presumed to doubt somewhat in the imposed terms; for this very doubt he is to be treated as a heathen or publican, or indeed no more to be received into our communion, than a dog or a swine:—how will this be justified at Christ's tribunal? But how much less justifiable is it, if not only communion be refused, but ruin designed, to such as differ from us about those our arbitrary additions to Christ's rules, and boundaries of Christian communion? And scarce can very serious persons (even in so serious a matter) forbear to smile, when they see them that have done so much harm to their fellow Christians attempt to justify it, only in effect from their having power to do it; which would as well justify any thing, since no man does what he could not do.

Nor yet do I look upon this proneness to innovate, and devise other terms of Christian communion than Christ hath himself appointed, as the peculiar character of a party; but as a symptom of the diseased state of the Christian church, too plainly appearing in all parties: as I also reckon it too low and narrow a design to aim at a oneness of communion among Christians of this and that single party and persuasion; which would but make so much the larger *ulcus* and *tumor*, a greater unnatural *apostem*, or secession, in the sacred body of our blessed Lord. Nothing in this kind can be a design worthy of a Christian, or suitable to the Spirit of Christ, but to have Christian communion extended, and limited, according to the extent and limits of visibly serious and vital Christianity. And hereof that distinguishing judgment, which is necessary, is as little difficult, as in private conversation between a visible friend and a visible enemy; or in public and political, between a visible subject and a visible rebel. So far as a discrimination can, and according to Christ's rules (not our own unbounded fancies) ought to be made; any serious living Christian of whatsoever party or denomination I ought to communicate with as such, and with only such. For living Christians to sever from one another, or to mingle with the dead, is an equal transgression; nor must our judgment of any such case be guided by mere charity; but must guide, it being itself guided by the known laws of Christ.

To sum up all; then shall we be in happy circumstances,

when once we shall have learned to distinguish between the essentials of Christianity, and accidental appendages; and between accidents of Christ's appointing, and of our devising; and to dread affixing of our own devices to so sacred an institution: much more, when every truth or duty contained in the Bible, cannot be counted essential or necessary; when we shall have learnt not only not to add inventions of our own to that sacred frame, but much more not to presume to insert them into the order of essentials or necessaries, and treat men as no Christians for wanting them: when the gospel shall have its liberty to the utmost ends of the earth: when the regenerating Spirit shall go forth with it, and propagate a divine and Godlike nature every where among men: when regeneration shall be understood to signify the communicating of such a nature, and such dispositions to men: when the weight of such words comes to be apprehended, "he that hateth his brother, abideth in death," (1 John ii.:) when to be born of God, ceases to signify with us being proselyted to this or that church, formed and distinguished by human device: when religious pretences cease to serve political purposes: when the interest of a party ceases to weigh more with us than the Christian interest: when sincerity shall be thought the noblest embellishment of a Christian: when "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them; and the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den; they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," (Isa. xi. 6—9;) then will our "peace be as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea," (Isa. xlviii. 18;) and the glorious Lord will himself be to us a place of broad waters, (*ch.* xxxiii. 21;) where straits, and rocks, and shelves, shall no more affright or endanger us. But if these things take no place with us, then have we cause to apprehend that "the things of our peace are yet hid from our eyes."

A SERMON

FOR

THE REFORMATION OF MANNERS.

Rom. xiii. 4.

For he is the minister of God to thee for good.

The temper of this our present assembly ought to be not only serious, but also mournful; for the occasion it hath reference to is both very important, and most deplorable; and requires to be attended to, as with very intense consideration, so with deep sorrow. Even "rivers of tears running down our eyes," as the words are, (Ps. cxix. 136,) could not more than equal the sadness of the case, *i. e.* the same there mentioned; because men (as is meant by the indefinite *they*) kept not God's law:—that there should be such disorders in the intellectual world; that reasonable creatures should be so degenerate, that it is become hardly accountable why they are called so. They are said to be constituted and distinguished by reason, but disdain to be governed by it, accounting their senses and their vices their better and wiser directors. With us the case is yet worse; that in a Christian city and kingdom, the insolencies of wickedness are so high, tumultuate at such a rate, and so daringly assault Heaven, that the rigour of laws, the severity of penalties, the vigilancy and justice of magistrates, with the vigorous assisting diligence of all good men in their several stations, are more necessary than sufficient to repress them. The same considerations that should excite our zeal, ought also to influence our grief; and the more apparently necessary it is that all possible endeavours be used for redress, and the stronger and more convictive arguments can be brought to evince it, the deeper sense we ought to have of the evils that create this necessity, and the more feelingly we should lament them. And if this be the temper of this assembly and of all other, upon this occasion, this would give us measures, and set us right as to the whole business of such a season.

Nobody will then think it should be the business of the sermon to please curious ears, or of the hearers to criticise upon the sermon; or that it ought to be my present business to compliment the worthy persons that have associated on this account, how laudable soever their undertaking is. But it will be the common agreed business of us all to take to heart the sad exigency of the case, to be suitably affected with it, and quickened to what shall appear to be our duty in reference thereto. And though the words I have read do more directly respect the part and office of rulers, yet since there is that relation between them that govern, and those that are under government, that the duty of the one will plainly imply and connote the duty of the other, I shall so consider the words as they may have a direct or collateral reference to all sorts of hearers; and do point out the duty, as well of them that live under government, as of them that govern.

We are therefore to take notice, that the text admits, either of an absolute consideration, or a relative. *Absolutely* considered, it is an *assertion; relatively*, it is an argument, as the introductive particle, *for*, shows. For the *absolute* consideration of the words, as they are an assertion, we are to see what they assert. The person spoken of under the term *He*, is any ruler, supreme or subordinate, as in that parallel text, which we may take for a comment upon this, is expressed, (1 Pet. ii. 13, 14,) "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or to governors, as sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." The words ἐξουσίαι, and ἄρχοντες, used in this context, admit of the same extent. So among others, that great man, Grotius, understands this place also, not only of kings and princes, but whosoever are the *tutores statûs publici*, (borrowing that expression from Seneca) any that are to take care of the public state, by whatsoever name they are designed:—indefinitely, any magistrate whatsoever. That which is said of such a one, contains an account of the original, and the end of his office and power. The *original* of it, that he is the minister of God, which signifies he is, as such, to act only by his authority, derived from him, as, *v.* 1, "there is no power but from God, and the powers that be are ordained of God:" which also implies that such power is to be used for God, and that consequently God is to be the ruler's first and last; and he is to be subordinate to God, both as his principle and end. Acting by his authority, he is by consequence to act for his interest; his minister or servant is to serve him.

But besides what is thus implied of the general and ultimate end of the magistrate's power, in what is more directly said of the *original* of it; we have also a more explicit account of the

end of it, *viz.* the next, and more particular end, which is twofold: the end for *whom*, indefinitely expressed; for thee, *i. e.* for every or any one that lives under government; and, by consequence, the whole governed community. For all the parts make up the whole. And further, we have the end for *what*, that is, for good, the good of each individual, and of the whole community, as comprehending all the individuals. Thus we see what the words contain *absolutely* considered, as they are an *assertion.*

We are to consider them *relatively* as they are an *argument.* So the particle, *for*, shows their *relation*, and directs us backward, where we shall see what they argue. And we find they are brought in to enforce the duty before enjoined, which is twofold.—Primary, and more principal:—Consequential, deduced from the former.—The *primary* duty is that, (*v.* 1,) "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," or to the powers that are above us. Some blame the comparative expression, *sublimioribus*, "higher," for which there is no pretence, from the word ὑπερέχουσαι, that only signifies the powers mentioned to be over us, whether in a higher or lower degree. Let them be less or more above us, we are to be subject to them.—The *subsequent* duty is double, first, that they are not to be resisted: a doctrine which from the terms of the context is capable of being so stated, as neither to be just matter of reproach or scandal to the wise and good, nor of sport and laughter to another sort of men. But that is not my present business. And secondly, that they are not to be (unduly) dreaded; or apprehended as a terror, *i. e.* not otherwise, than (in the design of their appointment) they are so, *viz.* to evil works and the workers of them, not to the good. *v.* 3. A fear of reverence is indeed due from all to their character, and the dignity of their station: a filial fear, that of children, for they are the fathers of their country; not a servile, or that of slaves, except from such as are so—evil-doers, who are slaves of the vilest and more ignoble sort, to their own lusts, that enslave their minds, which might otherwise enjoy the most generous liberty under the meanest and most oppressive external servitude. The text, according to its immediate reference, is but an amplification of the reason alleged, why the magistrate is not to be looked upon with terror and affright by any but such as resolve upon a profligately wicked course of life, not by such as intend only a course of well-doing. For, if thou be such, he is the minister of God to thee for good; his sword is only formidable when it fetches its blow from above, when it is bathed in heaven, as we may borrow the words, (Is. xxxiv. 5,) when it is wielded according to divine appointment, and God and he concur in the same stroke. When it is otherwise, it is true that the fallible or unrighteous human ruler, may for well-

doing afflict thee, and therein do thee wrong, but he can do thee no hurt, even though the stroke were mortal, (Luke xii. 4,) for our Lord forbids the fear of what is no worse: so said Socrates of them that persecuted him to death, "They can kill me, but cannot hurt me." "Who is it that can harm you, (saith a great apostle) if ye be followers of that which is good?" 1 Pet. iii. 13. And it is added, (*v.* 14,) "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye." And hath any man reason to be afraid of being happy?

But though this be the more immediate reference of these words, "He is the minister of God to thee for good," and is therefore, not to be unduly feared; they do yet ultimately and more principally respect the grand precept first laid down, of being subject to the powers over us: which is evident, for that upon this very ground, and the intervening consideration which further illustrates it, this same precept is resumed and pressed upon conscience, and a necessity is put upon it, on the same account, *viz.* that because the magistrate is the minister of God for good, and is to be a terror to evil-doers, and hath a sword put into his hands for that purpose, which he is not to bear in vain, but must be the minister of God in this kind, *viz.* as a revenger, to execute wrath upon such as do evil; that therefore we must needs be subject, and that not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. This is therefore the principal relation of these words, *viz.* as an argument to prove that he, the magistrate, is the minister of God to us for good; that therefore we ought not only not to resist him when he is doing his duty, nor be afraid of him when we are but doing ours; but that we also ought to be subject to him; and that, not only that we may escape wrath, but that we may satisfy conscience. This is therefore the relation, according whereto we shall consider these words, *viz.* as they are an argument to enforce the required subjection. Which subjection, that we may the more fully apprehend, it will be requisite with the more care to consider the propriety of the word used to express it. It is a word that carries order, τάξις, in the bowels of it, ὑποτασσέσθω, (*v.* 1,) and ὑποτάσσεσθαι, (*v.* 4,) and with the preposition ὑπὸ, it signifies order under another, as of inferiors under superiors; it imports therefore, not to be subject only, but subordinate and subservient. And the form wherein it is here used, admitting of its being taken not strictly in the passive sense, but in the middle, whereupon it may be indifferently capable of being rendered actively, *viz.* not only to be subordinate, but by your own act, and with your own design, subordinate yourselves to the magistrate, come into order under him as he is God's minister, invested by him with power for such and such purposes. This, without straining, carries the sense yet higher.

And whereas τάξις is a word of known military import, and signifies the order of an army formed for battle, wherein every one knows his own rank, place and station, it is as if it were said, take your place, come into rank, that you may, under the commander's conduct, *in acie stare*, "stand in order of battle;" as the word ἀντιτάσσεσθαι, rendered to resist the ruler, is *ex adverso in acie stare*, "to stand in rank or in battalia against him." You are not only not to resist, but you are to assist, and in your place and station stand by him, whom God hath deputed to be his minister, as he is to promote common good, and be a terror to them that do evil. This was the just claim and demand of that excellent prince, (Ps. xciv. 16,) "Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers, and stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" This, according to lexicographers of good note, is the import of that word, which we lay such weight upon, and accordingly very valuable expositors understand this place. By this time, therefore, you may see what place and order these words I pitched upon, have in the series of the apostle's discourse; and thereupon what respect they have upon the design for which we are met; pursuant whereto, they admit of being thus summed up:—

That for this reason, and under this notion, as the magistrate is to be a terror to them that do evil, and therein God's minister for good to them over whom he is set; it belongs to every soul, or to all persons under his government, to be, each one in his station, and according to his capacity, actively and with their own design, subordinate and subservient to him herein. In speaking to this I shall show,—That the magistrate is God's minister, upon the mentioned account, and that therefore such duty is incumbent upon all that live under government. The former whereof is a doctrinal proposition, the other the use of it.

I. That the magistrate is the minister of God, for the good of them over whom he is set. This we are to consider by parts. That—

First. He is God's minister. Hereof none can doubt, who doubt or deny not the being of God. His being God's minister, signifies his deriving his power from him; who else can be the fountain of power, but he who is the fountain of all Being? It is true the governing power hath not been always derived the same way, but it hath been always from the same fountain. When God was pleased to have a people within a peculiar sort of enclosure, more especially appropriate to himself; he was very particular in signifying his will concerning all material things that concerned their government: what the form of it should be; what persons should govern, or in what way the power and right to govern should descend, and

be conveyed to them; what laws they should be governed by; what the methods should be of governing, according to those laws.

Since it is very evident much is left to the prudence of men, always to be directed by general rules of equity, and, as these allow, by immediate interpositions of his own Providence; I resolve this discourse shall be involved in no controversies, and therefore shall not determine, nor go about to dispute, as to what is so left, how much or how little that may be. But it is plain and indisputable, that the governing power he reserves and claims to himself; *i. e.* not to exercise it himself immediately, in a political way; but to communicate and transmit it to them that shall. So that in what way soever it is derived to this or that person, or under whatsoever form, the conferring of it he makes his own act: as we find it said to Nebuchadnezzar, (Dan. ii. 37,) "The God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom." And he is told, (*ch.* iv. 32,) "The Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth them to whomsoever he will." And so much, you see, is in this context asserted to him over and over. Two things are plain in this matter:—That it is the mind of God, there should be such a thing as magistracy and government in this world. And again, that men shall be governed by men, by some or other of themselves, who shall be, as the text speaks, God's ministers. As he is the original of the governing power, the administration shall be in them. And of the mind of God in both these there is sufficient indication by the very law of nature. How is it conceivable such sentiments should be so common, if they were not from a common cause? He seems to me to have determined well, (if it be considered in what way the course of nature is now continued, and by whom all things consist) that makes the governing power to be from God, as the Author of nature;* and that though government, as it is such and such, be *juris humani*, it is *juris divini*, absolutely considered, or as it is government. It was most apparently a thing worthy of God, when he peopled this world with such a sort of creatures as man, to provide for the maintaining of common order among them; who without government were but a *turba*, a *colluvies*, as a noted heathen speaks on a different account—a rout of men. Had man continued in unstained innocency, it is concluded on all hands there must have been a government among them; *i. e.* not punitive or coercive, for which there could have been no occasion; but directive and conservative of superiority and inferiority, as it is also even among the angels of heaven, where are no inordinate dispositions to be repressed. Much more is government, in the severer parts of it, necessary for lapsed man on earth; the making of restrictive laws, and

* Suar. de Leg. lib. iii. c. 3, 4.

governing by them. And that God should design the governing of men by men, was also most agreeable to the perfections of his nature; especially his wisdom and his goodness, considered in comparison to the imperfection of this our present state. When the government over Israel was a theocracy, God used the ministry of men in the management of it. That it should be his ordinary stated course to govern by voices or visions, or by frightful appearances, such as those on Mount Sinai, had been very little suitable to this our state of probation; as his accurate wisdom we find hath determined; and was less agreeable to his benignity and goodness, which would not amazingly terrify, where he designed more gently to admonish and instruct. Hence had he regard to their frailty, who so passionately supplicated, "Let not God speak to us, lest we die;" and this his compassionate goodness we are led to consider, being next to treat of the end of this his constitution, *viz.*—

Secondly. That the magistrate is God's minister to men, for their good. Next to the sweet airs and breathings of the gospel itself, where have we a kinder or more significant discovery of God's good will to men? Here we are to stay and wonder, not to assent only, but to admire! To behold the world in a revolt! the dwellers on earth in arms against heaven! And the councils that are taken above are how to do them good: how God-like is this! How suitable to magnificent goodness! or beneficent greatness! Being secure from hurt from their impotent attempts, and when revenge was so easy, to study not only not to harm them, nor also how they might less harm and mischief themselves; but how to do them good: this was every way great and most suitable to the greatness of God: wherein it falls into conjunction with so immense and absolute goodness, as doth beyond what any created mind would ask or think! This imports not implacableness, nor destructive design towards the generality of mankind; but great benignity even to every soul, in as full extent as the command runs to be subject to the higher powers. This is, we find, another medium by which God testifies, or leaves not himself without witness, besides what we have elsewhere; that he gives men rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons.

The most compassionate eye of God beholds men under the power of vicious inclination, bent upon destructive ways; whereas, by the course of nature, which he hath fixed, he should give them ordinarily competent time, as he hath given them breath and being, and all things, (Acts xvii.) that they might seek after him, and labour to feel and find him out; they live in a contemptuous neglect of him, and are cruel to themselves, oft shorten their own time, live too fast, and make too much haste to dig their own graves, and turn their habitation into a charnel

house; yea, even bury themselves alive, in stupifying sensuality and vice. God, though provoked, hastens not their destruction by sudden revenge; he animadverts not upon them by flames, and thunderbolts, nor amazes them by astonishing appearances; his terrors make them not afraid. He only clothes some from among themselves with his authority, who shall appear on the stage with them, as gods among men; resembling themselves in human nature, and God in power, as they should in other Godlike excellencies; if men would so far co-operate towards their own welfare, as they ought, that by such gentler methods some stop might be put to the stream and flood of miseries, wherewith otherwise unrestrained wickedness is continually ready to deluge the world. The magistrate is herein an instrument of good, and of wrath at once; these two things disagree not, to be a minister for good, and to execute wrath. This latter is said in conformity to vulgar apprehension, because when men afflict one another, it is usually the effect of wrath; when a fixed, though most sedate and calm resolution to punish hath the same effect, this most different cause is called by the same name. In this allusion is wrath ascribed to God, the most serene and dispassionate of all beings; and hence they who represent him among men in authority, ought in this respect to be Godlike too. *Magistratus non debet irasci;* judges (as Cicero most aptly speaks) ought to be *legum similes,* "like the laws" themselves, which are moved by no passion, are angry with no man, but keep one steady tenor, so as neither to despite an enemy, nor indulge a friend. To this temper it well agrees to design good, (as in lancing a tumour) where one does a present hurt. Two ways may punishment be a proper and apt, though it be not always an effectual, means of doing good.

1. As it may work the good of the offenders themselves: to which it hath in itself a tendency, if the disease be not so strong and stubborn as to defy the remedy; as it puts them upon reflecting, and should awaken in them their considering power. As in the matter of treason against a rightful power, *Deliberasse est descivisse,*—to deliberate whether to be loyal, or no, is to revolt,—so it is in the just and glorious rupture that is to be made of the bonds of vice, whereby men are held as slaves under the usurped power of the devil's kingdom. If once they come duly to consider, they will disdain so vile a servitude; when they meet with a check in their way, it may occasion them to check themselves, and consider their ways. No external means do any good to the minds of men, otherwise than as they themselves are engaged, drawn in, and made parties, in some sense against, but (as we are compounded) in a higher and nobler, for ourselves. This comes in as one among external means of that kind, as do give some present uneasiness, but in order

to after advantage; it afflicts, it is true, and no affliction is for the present joyous, but grievous, but yields afterwards a peaceable fruit. When the magistrate's power is called a sword, it signifies its business is to wound; but as wounds are generally painful, some are sanative healing wounds, and so are these designed, and apt to be. They vex a while, but *vexatio dat intellectum*, it rouses the understanding, and is most apt to do so to good purpose in plain and undisputed cases; and where there is no pretence for conscience, in the cause one suffers for.

Where indeed a formed and fixed judgment of conscience once hath place, for the practice which exposes a man to suffering; mulcts and prisons, gibbets and fagots are very improper means of illumination, or of public utility; if the civil peace, and the substance of religion be not hurt by such practice. And the sincerity of that conscience is much to be suspected, that is ever altered by such methods, but no man will pretend it is against his conscience, not to be drunk, not to debauch, or to be sober, chaste, and virtuous. Therefore a man's way lies open to that consideration which is most immediately to influence his practice, to correct a lewd, and begin a regular good course. He needs not be detained with any subtle disputes, or be put to solve perplexed doubts, or answer specious arguments and objections. It is obvious to him to bethink himself:—"What a strange sort of anomalous creature am I become, whom the law of mine own nature remonstrates against? How degenerate a thing! that after forsaking my own noble order of intelligent creatures to herd with brutes, that have made myself unfit for human society, otherwise than as one that must bear a mark, wear a disgraceful scar, from the wound of a sword, not that of a public enemy, or my own; but a sword drawn in defence of the sacred rights of God, and to vindicate the honour of mankind!" And hereupon, if the crime be not capital, with the concurrent use of other appointed means, and the blessing of God upon all, (from whence only the good issue can be hoped for) may a vicious person be so reclaimed, as to become of great use in the world. Yea, and if the crime be capital, such as that the criminal survives not the punishment, but the sword of justice must cut him off from the land of the living; our charity will not let us doubt but there have been instances, wherein a prison and arraignment, and the sentence of death, have been the blest effectual means to the offenders of their escaping the more terrible sentence, and of obtaining eternal life. But however, though the ministry of civil justice doth often fail of its most desirable effects, as to the particular persons that suffer it, (as even the ministration of the gospel of grace proves also ineffectual to many,) yet—

2. It is not only apt, but effectual to do much good to others, and generally to the community. Punishment is justly said to be, in its proper design, medicinal to the delinquents; yet not always in the event.* But the common good it may serve, when contumacious offenders perish under the deserved infliction of it. This was the thing designed by the righteous Judge of all the earth, when he gave so particular directions how to punish offenders in such and such kinds, that others might hear and fear, and do no more so wickedly. And in all equal government, it is the design of penal laws that the terror might reach to all, the punishment itself but to a few. And when the utmost endeavours that can be used, shall have had that happy success to reduce a vast number of offenders to a paucity; we should rejoice to see that there needed to be but few examples made in such kinds. In the mean time, where this sword of the Lord, in the hands of his ministers of justice, is unsheathed, and used according to the exigency of the case; it is an apt and likely means to have a happy effect for the good of the community; both as it may put a stop to the prevailing wickedness of men, and may avert, from a nation, the provoked wrath of God.

(1.) As it may give some check to the daringness and triumph of unrebuked wickedness, which indeed naturally carries in it a pusillanimous meanness, and a vile abjection of mind, so as no where to insult, but where it meets, in those who should oppose it, a timorous fainting and succumbency; it so far resembles the devil, whose offspring it is, that being resisted it flees. When men find that while they dare to affront the universal Ruler, and offer indignities to his throne, there are those that, clothed with his authority, and bearing his character, dare to vindicate the injury; when they feel the smart and cost of open wickedness, it will no doubt become, at least, less open, and seek closer corners. They will not long hold up the head, in so hopeless and deplorable a cause, that can afford them no support, no relief to their abject sinking spirits, in suffering for it. What encouraging testimony of conscience can they have, that not only act from no direction of conscience, but in defiance of it? What God, can they hope, will reward their sufferings which they incur by highest contempt of God? And if such gross immoralities be somewhat generally redressed, as more directly fall under the magistrate's animadversion, how great a common good must it infer; inasmuch as those evils, in their own nature, tend to the detriment, decay, and ruin of a people where they prevail? They darken the glory of a nation, which how great a lustre hath it cast abroad in the world from the Romans and Spartans, and other civilized people, when their sumptuary and other laws were strictly observed, that repressed undue excesses;

* Aquin. Sum. I. 2æ. q. 87.

and when temperance, frugality, industry, justice, fidelity, and consequently fortitude, and all other virtues, excelled and were conspicuous among them! It were a great thing we should have to transmit to posterity, might we see England recover its former, or arrive to the further glory which it is to be hoped it may acquire in these kinds!

Yea, and the vices which are endeavoured to be redressed, are such as not only prejudice the reputation, but the real welfare of any nation. Profane swearing tends gradually to take away the reverence of an oath; which, where it is lost, what becomes of human society? And more sensual vices tend to make us an effeminate, mean-spirited, a desident, lazy, slothful, unhealthful people, useless to the glorious prince and excellent government we live under; neither fit to endure the hardships, nor encounter the hazards of war, nor apply ourselves to the business, or undergo the labours that belong to a state of peace, and do consequently tend to infer upon us a deplorable, but unpitied poverty; and (which all will pretend to abhor) slavery at length. For they are most unfit for an ingenuous, free sort of government, or to be otherwise governed than as slaves or brutes, who have learnt nothing of self-government; and are at the next step of being slaves to other men, who have first made themselves slaves to their own vicious inclinations. Thus are such liable to all sorts of temporal calamities and miseries in this world. Besides, what is of so far more tremendous import, that the same vile and stupifying lusts tend to infer an utter indisposition to comport with, or attend to, "the glorious gospel of the blessed God;" and so to ruin men's hopes for the other world, and make their case unconceivably worse, in the judgment of the great day, than theirs of Tyre or Sidon, Sodom or Gomorrha. But how much may a just, prudent, well-tempered vigilancy and severity do, towards the prevention of all this? and so much the more, by how much public animadversions shall render the things men incur punishment for, not only in common estimate, unrighteous, but ignominious things.

That principle of shame in the nature of man, if by proper applications it were endeavoured to be wrought upon, would contribute more to the reforming a vicious world, than most other methods that have ever been tried to that purpose. It is a tender passion, of quick and most acute sense; things that are thought opprobrious, have so sensible a pungency with them, that (though all tempers are not herein alike) many that can feel little else, reckon a disgrace an unsufferable thing. And I little doubt but if punishments for grosser vices were more attempered to this principle, they would have much more effect. This hath been too much apprehended by the usurping god of this world; this engine he hath made it his business to turn, and manage to

the contrary purpose, to drive or keep serious religion out of the world; yea, to make men ashamed of being sober, temperate, and regular in their conversation, lest they should also be thought religious, and to have any thing of the fear of God in them; and make them debauch to save their reputation. A plain document to such as covet to see a reformation of manners in our days, what course ought to be endeavoured in order thereto. A great apprehension to this purpose that noble pagan* seems to have had; who, inquiring whence legislation† had its rise, from some man or from God? and determining from God, if we will give the most righteous judgment that can be given doth, elsewhere write to this effect:—that Jupiter,‡ pitying the miseries of men by their indulgence to vice, lest mankind should utterly perish, sent Mercury to implant in them, together with justice, shame, as the most effectual means to prevent the total ruin of the world.

And so inseparable is the connection between being wicked and being miserable, that whatsoever molestation and uneasiness tends to extinguish dispositions to wickedness, ought to be reckoned given with very merciful intentions. It is no improbable discourse which an ingenious modern writer§ hath to this purpose, (for I pretend not to give his words, not having the book now at hand) that though the drowning of the world was great severity to them who did then inhabit it, yet it was an act of mercy to mankind. For hereby (he reckoned) the former more luxuriant fertility of the earth was so far reduced and checked, as not, so spontaneously, to afford nutriment to vice; that men in after time must hereby be more constrained to labour and industry, and made more considerate, and capable of serious thoughts; and that when also they should find their time by this change of the state of the world naturally contracted within narrower limits, they would be more awakened to consider and mind any overtures, that should be, in following time, made to them in order to their attaining a better state in another world; and consequently the more susceptible of the gospel in the proper season thereof. If God were severe with so merciful intentions, what lies within the compass of these ministers of his justice, appointed for common good, ought certainly to be endeavoured in imitation of him whom they represent.

(2.) The administration of punitive justice, when the occasion requires it, tends also to the common good; as it may contribute towards the appeasing of God's anger against a sinful people, and the turning it away from them.

What may be collected from that noble instance of Phinehas's heroical zeal, upon which a raging plague was stayed, compared with the effect which Ahab's humiliation, and Nineveh's repent-

* Plato. † De Leg. lib. i. ‡ In Protag. § Dr. Woodward's Essay.

ance, had in averting temporal judgments, would signify not a little to this purpose. But I must pass to the—

II. Head of discourse proposed, *viz.* to argue and enforce from hence the duty incumbent upon all, under government, as their several stations and capacities can admit, to be, in due subordination, assisting and serviceable to the magistrate, as in executing punitive justice he is the minister of God for good. And this (as hath been said) is to be the use of the former part of the discourse, which will answer to the design of the apostle's discourse, and agree to the natural order of the things discoursed in this context. For, the magistrate is the minister of God for good, to us, is a *doctrine;* and let every soul be subject or subordinate to him, accordingly an *exhortation,* which was at first proposed, and is afterwards resumed and pressed, (*v.* 5) as of absolute necessity from that doctrine. Wherefore it is necessary that we be, or we must needs be, subject. There is an ἀνάγκη put upon it, a cogent, ineluctable necessity, arising even from hence, *viz.* from this doctrinal assertion as it is proposed, and as it is afterward applied to this purpose;—we are not to be dispensed with in the case, but we must every one do our parts in subordination to the magistrate, and that not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake. We shall therefore show,—what duty we who are in private capacities are exhorted to, and—show the strength of the apostle's argument, as it is proposed in the text, and amplified in what follows, to engage us to that duty.

First. For the duty we are exhorted to; that we may understand what it is, I shall only premise some few plain things, and then leave it to yourselves to judge, and conclude what it is, and cannot but be.

1. It is plain, private persons are not to do the magistrate's part, are not to invade his office, nor usurp his authority; they are to act but in subordination to him, as their charge given them plainly imports.

2. They are not only not to oppose him. As the former would be too much, this would be too little. The arguments used to enforce it, import much more. What, because he is the minister of God for good, and to me, am I therefore only not to oppose him? Can it be thought there should be such an apparatus of argument, to draw from it so faint and dilute an inference? Ought not every man so far to reverence God's authority as to endeavour it may not lose its design? And ought not every man to co-operate to a common good, wherein each man claims a part?

3. It is not only to save myself from punishment, by not doing the evil which would expose me to the stroke of the sword; for my duty I am to do, not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake, which plainly respects God and his authority

and interest, which I am to obey and serve. And I am to endeavour, not only that he may not be a terror to me as an evil-doer, but that he may be a terror to them that are such.

4. Somewhat positive is manifestly carried in the word ὑποτάσσεσθαι; to subject, or subordinate myself to him, under this very notion, as the minister of God for good. Is this doing nothing? He is plainly said to be the minister of God for good, under this special notion, as he is the administrator of punitive justice, *viz.* as he bears the sword, and is to be a terror to evil-doers. I am so to subordinate myself, as that herein he may effectually serve the end of his office, and not bear the sword in vain.

Now, upon all this, judge you yourselves what is it that is left to be my duty in a private capacity, that is less than the magistrate's part; more than the mentioned negatives; and yet so much, as whereby I am to take care to my uttermost, that he may do good in his office of punishing wickedness; so as that his doing his duty must some way depend upon my doing mine, and be the effect of it, or of theirs who are in like circumstances, and so but under the same common obligation with me; so that ordinarily his duty cannot be done, without any care or concern of theirs or mine. What, I say, can it be less than to bring punishable matters under his cognizance? Otherwise, if no obligation lie upon private persons, to this purpose, he will only be to punish such wickedness as he beholds with his own eyes; and then how narrow will his precinct be! What multitudes of magistrates must there then be! And what a monster thereupon would the body politic become!

But here if any man ask me the question, (because what is to be done herein is to be done for conscience' sake) am I bound in conscience to discover to a magistrate all the evil that I know of any man, that is justly punishable by law? To this I shall only at present say, that cases of conscience can only be with judgment resolved *in hypothesi*, and with application to this or that person, when material circumstances, relating thereto, are distinctly known. I must have clear grounds if I will conceal such a man's punishable fault, upon which I may judge that more good is likely to be done to his soul; that the honour of God and the public good will be more served by the concealment, than by the discovery; and the government not hurt or endangered. But if the crime be such as is national, and imports contempt of God and his laws, and in reference whereto, the offender expresses more shame of the punishment than of the fault; and I will yet, upon private respects to him or myself, conceal it, I shall herein while I pretend conscience in the case, cheat my conscience and not satisfy it. And I add, in reference to this case, let any man, that would exempt his

conscience from any sense of obligation to endeavour the punishment of offenders in the mentioned kinds, take great care he do not ground his concealment upon other than very peculiar grounds, or not common to him with any other man in a like case. Is it because such a one is my friend? Or he may bear me a grudge? Or I lose his custom? &c. These are things so common, that guiding myself by such measures is both to overthrow magistracy and conscience too. Upon the whole, therefore, what is ordinarily a private man's duty in such cases, is sufficiently evident. Therefore,

Secondly, Let us see the force of the apostle's arguings, to engage us to it.

1. That the magistrate, as he is the dispenser of punitive justice, is God's minister. It is the authority of God that he is invested with; he bears a sword which God hath put into his hand. Is that authority to be eluded, and made to signify nothing? Is that sword to be borne in vain? What an awe should this lay upon our spirits! It is, therefore, to be served for conscience' sake, which hath principal reference to God. We need not here dispute whether human laws bind conscience; no doubt they do, when they have an antecedent reason, or goodness. If men command what God forbids, the apostles make their appeal to enemies, as judges whom they were to obey. He is the minister of God for good, not for hurt, or for no good; it is a perverting of God's authority, to do mischief by the pretence of it; a debasing it, to trifle with it. But the question is out of doors, when human laws are but subsidiary to divine, and enjoin the same thing. And as that celebrated saying of St. Austin is applied, by him, to the former case, of a supposed contradiction of the proconsul's command to the emperor's for disobeying the inferior; it is equally applicable, as fortifying the obligation to obey both when they are coincident.

And this consideration can be insignificant with none, but such as say in their hearts there is no God; that think this world hath no universal sovereign Ruler, or no Lord over it; and it might as well be supposed to have no intelligent Maker, to have become what it is by chance: an imagination which the most vicious, that make any use of thoughts, begin to be ashamed of; and have therefore thought fit to quit the absurd name of atheist for the more accountable, as well as more convenient name of deist. But then it is strange they should not see the consequence from Maker, to Ruler; and from God's having made this world, to its being under his present government, and liable to his future judgment; or that from any just apprehension of the nature of God, they should not collect so much of the nature of their own souls, as to judge them capable

of subsisting out of these bodies, and in another world; and consequently of their being liable to a future judgment, for what they have been and done in this! Or that a Being of so much wisdom and goodness in conjunction with power, as to have made such a world as this, and such a creature as man in it; should not have made him for nobler ends than are attainable in this world.

If any of themselves had power enough to make such another sort of creature, and furnish him with faculties capable of such acquisitions and attainments, only to fetch a few turns in the world, and form plots and projects in it, that must, with himself, shortly come to nothing; they would have little cause to boast of the performance:—they would have cause to be ashamed of it, to use so unconceivable power only to play tricks, that neither themselves nor any one else should ever be the better for! And though they might, hereby, awhile amuse the world, they would gain little reputation of wisdom or goodness above other men, by being the authors of so useless a design, that would at length appear to have nothing of design in it; for finally it terminates in mere nothing. But the great God hath not left himself without witness; the illustrious characters of his Godhead shine every where. He doth insist upon, and will assert his rights, in this lower world; it is a part of his creation, though a meaner part; he rules in the kingdoms of men, and he that rules will judge. The jests and laughter of fools will not overturn his throne; they that have taught themselves to turn his laws and the whole frame of his government over the world into ridicule, (because it is to be hoped they do not use to laugh always) should be advised by a wise and great man in his time, then to judge of their jest, when they have done laughing;* sometime they will have done, and shall consider that he to whom it belongs will judge over their heads, as he will over us all.

And if his throne and government are as insolently as they are vainly attempted against by many, and the most connive; we shall all be taken for a combination of rebels against our rightful Lord. It will be a heavy addition to be partakers of other men's sins, when every one hath more than enough of his own. Let me ask, would you not dread to be found guilty of misprision of treason, against the government under which we live? Why doth the fear of the great God, and the dread of being found accomplices against him, signify less with us? And what means it, that the charge of punishing great offenders is given to the community, "*thou*," every individual, as in the text; thee, all the individuals making up the community?

* Lord Verulam's Instaur. Mag.

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Ex. xxii. 18. And so for the idolater, "thou shalt bring forth that man or woman, and stone him." Deut. xiii. 13, 14; *ch.* xvii. 2—6. Is it that all the people were magistrates? no, but that it was not to be supposed that so horrid impieties could long escape unpunished, but by the people's, as well as the magistrate's, neglect; upon which all would be taken as conspirators against the great Lord of all.

2. Take the other part of the argument, that the magistrate is God's minister *for good to us*, is it enough for us not to hinder? Are we not all obliged, in our stations, to promote our own, our neighbours', and the common good? Our own, as we keep ourselves from being accessaries. Our neighbours', offending, as we contribute our endeavour that they may be less wicked, and (which we should further design) that they may become good. Our unoffending neighbours', for if grosser wickedness rule without control, who that are pious, sober, and virtuous, can long live in peace by such ill neighbours? We are for this directed to pray, (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2,) "for rulers, even all that are in authority, that we may live peaceable and quiet lives, in all godliness and honesty." And what we are to pray for, we do that ludicrously, if we endeavour it not too. Besides that the untainted, as yet, are liable to worse hurt, by the contagion of their example; and the common good is many ways to be served, as hath been shown. How laudable an excellency, among noble minded pagans, was love to their country! And even in this way to serve the common good, was reckoned by them a praiseworthy thing. "He (saith one of them) that doth no harm, is honourable; but he is worthy of double honour that prevents it; and he that assists the magistrate in punishing it, is most honourable, and far excels all his other citizens."* So far were they from thinking it an ignominious thing to bring offenders to punishment, and especially for impieties, or whatsoever signified a contempt of religion; such regard they had to the honour of their gods, who were no gods. Shall we reckon the true and living God to deserve from us less regard to his violated honour? The common good, which in this way we are to promote, is so common, as all good men can, without scruple, concur in the design; and blessed be God they so generally do so. We have the greatest encouragement hereto, by considering the immediate fountain of the magistrate's power and office, our glorious and ever blessed Redeemer and Lord; to whom all power is given in heaven and earth; by whom kings reign; who is the head of all things to the church; and through whom the divine goodness flows towards a lost world. This infers an obligation upon all, that bear the Christian name, to serve the

* Plat. de Leg. lib. 5, συγκολάζων τοῖς ἄρχουσι.

proper ends of this branch of his power; as they have, in general, to acknowledge him for Lord and Christ.

They who, therefore, make it their business to promote this design, do not herein serve the interest of a party, but the interest of the universal Ruler, of our blessed Redeemer, and of mankind. And they who are agreed, with sincere minds, upon so great and important an end as the serving this most comprehensive interest, are agreed in a greater thing than they can differ in. To differ about a ceremony or two, or a set of words, is but a trifle compared with being agreed in absolute devotedness to God and Christ, and in a design, as far as in them lies, of doing good to all. An agreement in substantial godliness and Christianity, in humility, meekness, self-denial; in singleness of heart, benignity, charity, entire love to sincere Christians, as such; in universal love to mankind, and in a design of doing all the good we can in the world, (notwithstanding such go under different denominations, and do differ in so minute things) is the most valuable agreement that can be among Christians. They that are thus agreed are more one, and do less differ in the temper and complexion of their minds from one another, than they who are never so much agreed in being for, or against, this or that external form or mode of religion;—but are full of envy, wrath, malice, bitterness, falsehood, do differ from them all, and from all good men. And I doubt not, when God's time comes of favouring Zion, we shall have churches constituted, by congregating what is of one kind, such as (for the main) are of one mind, spirit, character, and temper; and severing whatsoever is of a different kind, and quite alien hereto; and cease to have them constituted by what is unnecessary, much less by what is inconsistent with their very being. Pride, ambition, vain glory, and a terrene spirit, with carnal self-design, will not always prevent this. Heaven will grow too big for this earth; and the powers of the world to come, for those of this present evil world.

In the mean time let us draw as near one another as we can; and particularly unite in the most vigorous endeavour of carrying on this excellent design, which is now before us. And let it be with a temper of mind agreeing with God's kind design towards men, in appointing the magistrate to be his minister to them, *i. e.* for the doing them good. Let it be with minds full of all goodness, in conformity to the original first good, from whom, as such, this constitution proceeds. Despond not, as apprehending the stream is too strong, and there is no good to be done. That is to yield the day to victorious wickedness. It is to give vice the legislature, to let it be the law of the age, and govern the world; and it is to give up ourselves and our nation to perish as a lost people. Let us not be lost, before we are

lost. Much good hath been done in this kind heretofore. There was a time when (at Antioch) the severity of the magistrate was much regretted in the reign of that great prince Theodosius, and upon an ill occasion, the contemptuous subversion of his statutes. This cost Chrysostom divers orations or sermons to the people while yet presbyter there; in one whereof he asks them, What hurt had the terror of the magistrate done them? It hath shaken off our sloth, made us more honest, diligent, industrious.* He had told them above, and tells them after, They ought to give God thanks for it, that now there was not one drunken person, or one that sang lascivious songs, to be seen. Their city was become as a chaste matron, where great wantonness before did generally appear. Your experience hath told you much hath been done, you are still getting ground; God hath, we are to hope, effectually engaged the government in this blessed design; in subordination thereto, go on with alacrity.

Let me finally set before your eyes, the instructive practice of that excellent prince Jehosaphat, in a like case, (2 Chron. xix.) "when he was bringing back the people to the Lord God of their fathers, (*v.* 4,) and had set judges in the land, warning them to take heed as being to judge not for men, but for the Lord, (*v.* 6,) which showed they were not mere matters of *meum* and *teum* only they were to judge in, but matters immediately relating to the interest and honour of God, for he distinguishes the judgment of the Lord, and controversies. *v.* 8. He charges all to whom he spake, as they were severally concerned (and they were not concerned all alike) to "do their work, (*v.* 9,) in the fear of the Lord faithfully and with a perfect heart;" and concludes, as I do, with these words, (*v.* 11,) "deal courageously; and the Lord shall be with the good."

* Hom. 6. *ἀνδριάντων.*

A SERMON

DIRECTING WHAT WE ARE TO DO AFTER A STRICT INQUIRY, WHETHER OR NO WE TRULY LOVE GOD.

THE EPISTLE.

You may remember what a solemn awe was upon our congregation lately, at the preaching of this ensuing sermon, and that not a few tears dropped at the hearing of it. This engaged some of us to entreat our reverend pastor to give way, that by this publication it might be accommodated to your review. We know it is no more than one single thread that belongs to many other discourses upon the same subject, which have preceded, and to others which we hope will follow; but such as by your notes and memories may easily be wrought into the whole piece. It is but a thread, yet a golden one, and may contribute to the service of the tabernacle, as in Exod. xxv. We know it is a great condescension in him to suffer such an imperfect piece to come abroad; but when the reverend dean of C. and other learned persons of the church of England, have denied themselves, by suffering such small prints for the general good, we are persuaded, though he gave not a positive judgment for it, he will not dislike that which is for your service, and is intended to go no further. Receive it, therefore, read it over and over, and allot some times for the putting in practice the grand examination urged upon us, and do your utmost to persuade all under your roofs and commands to do the like; that that which was preached with so much holy fervour and affection, may beget in us and ours, a bright flame of divine love to our good Lord, to whom we commend you, and are—

Your affectionate brethren

And servants, &c.

A SERMON.

JOHN v. 42.

But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

YOU have heard several discourses from this Scripture, and from another in the same gospel that we spake to alternately with this at several times: "Thou knowest all things, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." *ch.* xx. 17. And that which, after doctrinal explication hath hitherto been insisted on, was an inquiry into the state of our own case in reference hereunto. Are we lovers of God in Christ, or are we not? There have been many things signified to you, by which this case might be discerned; and that which remains, and most naturally follows hereupon, is to direct you what you are to do, supposing your case upon inquiry, to be this or that. Why, such an inquiry, if it hath been attended to at all amongst us, it must have signified somewhat; it must, one would think, have some or other result; and what should we suppose it to result into, but either this, I do not love God, or, I do? These are most vastly different cases: it is a trial upon the most important point that could have been discussed among us; and supposing there should be two sorts among us, the effect of it is as if a parting line should be drawn through a congregation, severing the living from the dead; here are so many living, and so many dead souls. Indeed it is a very hard supposition, to suppose that there should be any one in all this assembly that doth not love God; a very hard supposition; I am extremely loath to make such a supposition; I would as much as in me is, not suppose it. For truly it were a very sad case that we should agree so far as we do in many other things, and not agree in this; that is, that we should agree so many of us to come all and meet together here in one place, agree to worship God together, agree to sing his praises together, to seek his face together, to call upon his name together, to hear his word together, and not agree all to love God together: the God whom we worship, whom we invocate,

whose name we bear, and unto whom we all of us pretend. For who is there among us will say, "I have no part in God?" And it were a most lovely thing, a most comely, desirable thing that all such worshipping assemblies, even this worshipping assembly, at this time, and all times, could still meet together under this one common notion, truly and justly assumed, as so many lovers of God. We are sure there will be an assembly, a general assembly, in which no one that is not a lover of God will be found; an assembly of glorious angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect; a numerous, an innumerable assembly; in which not one but a sincere lover of God. What a blessed thing were it, if our assemblies on earth were such! But we cannot speak more gently, than to say there is cause to fear they are not such; it hath been actually otherwise among a people professing the true religion: "They come before thee, and sit before thee as my people, and with their mouth show much love:" with their face, or in external appearance and show *(ore tenus)* they are lovers of God, "and they hear thy words, but they will not do them." Ezek. xxxiii. 31. If such a case hath been actually, it is still possible, and is still too much to be feared to be but too common a case.

But now supposing that there be different cases among us, in reference to these different cases there must be very different deportments, and a very different management of ourselves. This text more naturally leads me to direct what is to be done upon the supposition of the sadder case, most deplorably sadder, than one is no lover of God; though we must be led on thereto by some things common to both cases.

I. Therefore, that I may proceed by steps, this is requisite in the first place, that is, that we make one judgment of our case or another, that is, that we bring the matter some way to a judgment, nor let so great a thing as this, hang always in suspense. It is very plain (a little to press this) that,—

First, While the case hangs thus in suspense, it suspends the proper subsequent duty too, that should follow hereupon. What canst thou do that is certainly fit and proper for thy own soul, when thou dost not understand the state of its case? How canst thou guide thy course, or tell which way to apply or turn thyself? And—

Secondly, To press it further, consider that the not bringing, or omitting to bring, this matter to a judgment, if it proceed from indifferency and neglect, speaks the greatest contempt that can be both of God and thine own soul, the greatest that can be; that is, now supposing the question be asked, Dost thou love God? or dost thou not? and thou unconcernedly answerest, I cannot tell, I do not know; why, what, to be carelessly ignorant whether thou lovest God, or lovest him not! there could not be

a more concluding medium against thee, that thou dost not love him. It speaks thee at once to despise both God and thyself; what, to have this matter hang in indifferency through neglect, whether thou lovest God, or lovest him not? It shows that neither regard to God, nor a just value of thyself, makes thee care whether thou art a holy man or a devil: for know that the loving God, or not loving him, does more distinguish a saint from a devil, than wearing a body, or not wearing it can do. A devil if he did love God, were a saint; a man that doth not love God, he is no other, though he wear a body, than an incarnate devil: it is the want of love to God that makes the devil a devil, makes him what he is.

II. For further direction, take heed of passing a false judgment in this case, a judgment contrary to the truth. For,—

First, That is to no purpose, it will avail thee nothing; you cannot be advantaged by it, for yours is not the supreme judgment. There will be another and superior judgment to yours, that will control and reverse your false judgment, and make it signify nothing; it is therefore to no purpose. And,—

Secondly, It is a great piece of insolency, for it will be to oppose your judgment to his certain and most authorized judgment; who, if this be your case, hath already judged it, and tells you, "I know you, that you have not the love of God in you." It belongs to him by office to judge, "The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son;" as a little above in this chapter; and what, will you depose him? dethrone him? disannul his judgment? condemn him, that you may be righteous? (to borrow that, Job xl. 8.)

Thirdly, It is most absurd, supposing such characters as you have heard do conclude a man in this case, yet to judge himself a lover of God. If against the evidence of such characters a man should pronounce the wrong judgment, it would be the most unreasonable and absurd thing imaginable; for then let us but suppose, how that wronged judgment must lie related to those fore-mentioned characters that have been given you. Let me remind you of some of them,—he that never put forth the act of love to God, cannot say he hath the principle,—he that is not inclined to do good to others, for the sake of God, (1 John iii. 17;) —he that indulges himself in the inconsistent love of this world, (1 John ii. 15;)—he that lives not in obedience to his known laws, John xiv. 24, 1 John v. 3, (with many more.) Now if you will pass a judgment of your case, against the evidence of such characters, come forth then, let the matter be brought into clear sight, put your sense into plain words, and this it will be, "I am a lover of God, or I have the love of God in me, though I cannot tell that ever I put forth one act of love towards him in all my life; I have the love of God in me, though I never knew

what it meant to do good to any for his sake; against the express words of Scripture, 'How dwelleth the love of God in such a man?' I have the love of God in me, though I have constantly indulged myself in that which he maketh an inconsistent love; 'Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' I have the love of God in me, though I would never allow him to rule me, though I never kept his commandments with a design to please him and comply with his will. I have the love of God in me, though I never valued his love. I have the love of God in me, though I never cared for his image, for his presence, for his converse, for his interest and honour." I beseech you, consider how all this will sound! Can any thing be more absurdly spoken? And shall it be upon such improbabilities, or impossibilities as these, that any man will think it fit to venture his soul! "I will pawn my soul upon it, I will run the hazard of my soul upon it, I am a lover of God for all this?" Would you venture any thing else so, besides your soul? Would you venture a finger so, an eye so? It is to place the name, where there is nothing of the thing; it is to place the name of the thing upon its contrary. The soul of man cannot be in an indifferency towards God: but if there be not love and propension, there is aversion, and that is hatred. And what! is hatred to be called love? If you bear that habitual disposition of soul toward God, to go all the day long with no inclination towards him; no thought of him; no design to please him, to serve him, to glorify him; if this be your habitual temper, and usual course, will you call this love? Shall this contrariety to the love of God be called love to him? You may as well call water fire, or fire water, as so grossly misname things here; and therefore again,—

III. That we may advance somewhat; plainly and positively pass the true judgment. If the characters that you have heard do carry the matter so, come at last plainly and positively to pass the true judgment of your own case, though it be a sad one; and tell your own souls, "O my soul, though I must *sadly* say it, I must say it, all things conclude and make against thee; the love of God is not in thee." Why is it not as good this should be the present issue at your own bar, and at the tribunal of your own conscience, as before God's judgment-seat? Why should you not concur and fall in with Christ the authorized Judge, whose judgment is according to truth? Why, this is a thing that must be done, the case requires it, and God's express word requires it. 1 Cor. xi. 31. Other previous and preparatory duty plainly enjoined, doth by consequence enjoin it, and requires that it follow. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. What is examination for, but in order to judgment? It must therefore be done, and I

shall show how it must be done, and proceed to some further directions.

First. You must do it solemnly. Take yourselves aside at some fit season or another, inspect your own souls, review your life, consider what your wonted frame, and your ordinary course has been. And if you find, by such characters as heretofore were given, this is the truth of your case, then let judgment pass upon deliberation; "O my soul! thou hast not the love of God in thee, whatsoever thine appearances hitherto have been; and whatsoever thy peace and quiet hath been, thou hast not the love of God in thee." Let it be done with solemnity.

Secondly. Do it in the sight of God, as before him, as under his eye, as under the eye of Christ; that eye that is as a flame of fire, that searches hearts, and tries reins; arraign thyself before him. "Lord, I have here brought before thee a guilty soul, a delinquent soul, a wretched and horrid delinquent; a soul that was breathed into me by thee, an intelligent, understanding soul; a soul that hath love in its nature, but a soul that never loved thee."

Thirdly. Judge thyself before him, as to the *fact*, and as to the *fault*. As to the *fact:* "I have never yet loved thee, O God; I own it to thee; Lord, I accuse, I charge my soul with this before thee, this is the truth of the fact, I have not the love of God in me." And charge thyself with the *fault*. "O horrid creature that I am! I was made by thee, and don't love thee; thou didst breathe into me this reasonable immortal spirit, and it doth not love thee; it is thy own offspring, and does not love thee. It can never be blessed in any thing but thee, and it does not love thee." And then hereupon,—

Fourthly, Join to this *self-judging* and *self-loathing*. That we are to *judge ourselves* is a law laid upon us by the supreme Lawgiver, the one Lawgiver, that hath power to save and to destroy. And his word that enjoins it, as plainly tells us what must go with it, that this self-judging must be accompanied with *self-loathing*. Ezek. vi. 9; xx. 43; and xxxvi. 31. Do God that right upon thyself, that thou mayest tell him, "Blessed God! I do even hate myself, because I find I have not loved thee; and I cannot but hate myself, and I never will be reconciled to myself till I find I am reconciled to thee." This is doing justice. Doth not the Scripture usually and familiarly so represent to us the great turn of the soul to God, when poor sinners become penitents and return; that they are brought to hate themselves, and loathe themselves in their own eyes? And is there any thing that can make a soul so loathsome *in itself*, or ought to make it so loathsome *to itself*, as not to love God, to be destitute of the love of God? And then,—

Fifthly, Hereupon too, *pity* thyself, *pity* thy own soul. There

is cause to *hate* it, to *loathe* it, and is there no cause to *pity* it, to lament it? Doth not this look like a lamentable case, "O what a soul have I! that can love any thing else, that can love trifles, that can love impurities, that can love sin; and cannot love God, Christ, the most desirable good of souls. What a soul have I? What a monster in the creation of God is this soul of mine!" Methinks you should set yourselves, if any of you can find this to be the case, to weep over your own souls. Some may see cause to say, "O, my soul, thou hast in thee other valuable things; thou hast understanding in thee, judgment in thee, wit in thee; perhaps learning, considerable acquired endowments in thee; but thou hast not the love of God in thee. I can do many other commendable or useful things; I can discourse plausibly, argue subtilly, I can manage affairs dextrously; but I cannot love God. O, my soul, how great an essential dost thou want to all religion, to all duty, to all felicity! The one thing necessary thou wantest; thou hast everything but what thou needest more than any thing, more than all things; and O, my soul, what is like at this rate to become of thee? Where art thou to have thy eternal abode? To what regions of horror, and darkness, and woe art thou going? What society can be fit for thee, —no lover of God? No lover of God! what, but of infernal, accursed spirits, that are at utmost distance from him, and to whom no beam of holy, vital light shall ever shine to all eternity! Thou, O my soul, art self-abandoned to the blackness of darkness for ever. Thy doom is in thy breast, thy own bosom; thy no love to God is thy own doom, thy eternal doom; creates thee a present hell, and shows whither thou belongest."

Sixthly, Let a due *fear and solicitude* hereupon be set on work in thee. For consider thyself as one shortly to be arraigned before the supreme tribunal, and then here is the critical, vertical point upon which thy judgment turns; lovers of God, or no lovers of God. All are to be judged in reference to what they were and did in the body, whether good or evil: as in 2 Cor. v. 10. What wast thou as to this point, while thou wast in the body? For the last judgment regards that former state, what thou didst, and what was thy wont as to this, whilst thou wast in the body. Therefore, by the way, no hope after thou art gone out of the body: go out of the body no lover of God, the departing soul no lover of God, and this will be found your state at the judgment day. You are not to expect after death, a gospel to be preached, that you may then be reconciled to God. No, but what did you do in the body? According to that you are to be judged. Did you love God in this body while here? yea, or no? And this is a trial upon the most fundamental point; for as all the law is comprehended in love, as was formerly hinted, if you be found guilty in this point, that you were no

lover of God, totally destitute of the love of God; you were a perpetual underminer of his whole government, of the whole frame of his law, a disloyal creature, rebellious and false to the God that made you, to Jesus Christ that redeemed you by his blood. All disobedience and rebellion is summed up in this one word, *Having been no lover of God;* and will it not make any man's heart to meditate terror, to think of having such a charge as this likely to lie against him in the judgment of that day; that day, when the secrets of all hearts are to be laid open? Every work must then be brought into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good or evil. Eccles. xii. 14. And it will be to the confusion of many a one. It may be your no love of God was heretofore a great secret; you had a heart in which was no love of God, but it was a secret, you took care not to have it writ in your forehead; you conversed with men so plausibly, nobody took you to be no lover of God, to have a heart disaffected to God. But now, out comes the secret; that which you kept for a great secret all your days, out comes the secret; and to have such a secret as this disclosed to that vast assembly, before angels and men! Here was a creature, a reasonable creature, an intelligent soul, that lived upon the divine bounty and goodness so many years in the world below, and hid a false disloyal heart by a plausible show, and external profession of great devotedness to God, all the time of his abode in that world: O what a fearful thing would it be to have this secret so disclosed! And do you think that all the loyal creatures, that shall be spectators and auditors in the hearing of that great day, will not all conceive a just and a loyal indignation against such a one, when convicted of not loving God; convicted of not loving him that gave him breath, him whose he was, and to whom he belonged, whose name he bore? What a fearful thing will it be to stand convicted so upon such a point as this! And sure, in the meantime, there is great reason for continual fear, why a man's heart should *meditate terror!* One would even think that all the creation should be continually every moment in arms against him! One would be afraid that every wind that blows, should be a deadly blast to destroy me! that when the sun shines upon me, all its beams should be turned into vindictive flames to execute vengeance upon me! I would fear that even the very stones in the streets should fly against me, and every thing that meets me be my death! For, what! I have not the love of God in me! What, to go about the streets from day to day with a heart void of the love of God! What a heart have I! *Fear* ought to be exercised in this case; we are bid to fear if we do evil against a human ruler; "if thou do that which is evil be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain." Rom. xiii. 4. But if I be *such an evil doer*, against the supreme

Ruler, the Lord of heaven and earth, have I not reason to be afraid, and to think sadly with myself what will the end of this be? But yet I will add,—

Seventhly, Don't *despair* for all this; God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, as in that, 2 Cor. v. 19, that sin might not be imputed. He is in Christ to reconcile you, to win hearts, to captivate souls to the love of God; for what else is reconciliation on our part? He is in Christ to reconcile, to conquer enmity, to subdue disaffected hearts, to make such souls call and cry, "My Lord, and my God! I have been a stranger to thee, I will through thy grace be so no longer." Therefore don't despair. Despair that ever you should do well without loving God; but don't despair you shall ever be brought to love him, by any means. You have to do with him that is the Element of love, the God of love, the Fountain of love, the great Source of love, the Fountain at once both of loveliness and love, whose *nature* is love, and is with his *name* in his Son, who was manifested in the flesh, full of grace and truth, *i.e.* sincerest love. He was incarnate love, love pointed at us; and is upon these terms able to transform all the world into love. The nature of God is all love, (1 John iv. 16;) and in Christ he is Immanuel, God with us; so the divine love hath a direct aspect upon us. Why, then, apply yourselves to him, turn yourselves towards him, open your souls to him; say to him, "Lord, flow in with all the mighty powers of thine own love upon my soul, thou that canst of stones raise up children, and make them the true genuine sons of Abraham; (and there can be no such children without love;) O dissolve this stone, this stone in my heart; mollify this obdurate heart, turn it into love!" How soon may it be done upon due application. He can quickly do it, draw thee into a love-union with himself, so as that thou shouldest come to dwell in love; and dwell in God who is love, and he in thee. Then the foundations are surely laid, for all thy future duty, and for all thy future felicity. Then how pleasantly wilt thou obey, and how blessedly wilt thou enjoy God for ever! But such application must be made through Christ, and for the Spirit; which Spirit is the Spirit "of love and of power, and of a sound mind;" as you have it in that first of the second to Tim. *v.* 7. But these things I cannot now further insist upon.

FUNERAL SERMONS.

A FUNERAL SERMON,

FOR

MRS. ESTHER SAMPSON.

TO MY WORTHY FRIEND

DR. HENRY SAMPSON.

Sir,

I have perused the papers which you sent me, and find, as far as I can recollect, they contain in them the substance of what was delivered; with no more mistakes than is usual in writing from the mouth of one who is not of the slowest speakers.

Some things besides, which the limits of the time allowed not to be spoken (having some short memorials of them by me) I have added, conceiving they might also contribute towards the good end you proposed to yourself in so earnestly desiring this publication, the assisting of their patience, and their good and placid thoughts of God, who are exercised under long and languishing distempers. The observations which your profession hath occasioned you to make in the cases of many others, have I doubt not let you see the need of somewhat to this purpose; otherwise the example you have had so long before your eyes of so calm and composed a temper, in this excellent relative of yours, might have made you less apprehensive how great an addition a fretful inquiet spirit is, both to the sin and the affliction of a sickly state. I am sensible your own affliction is great, in the loss you now sustain; the relief will be great, and suitable, which the forethoughts of that state will afford, where they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

I am, Sir,

In much sincerity and affection,

Yours, to serve you in the work and labour of the gospel,

J. H.

ON THE DEATH OF

MRS. ESTHER SAMPSON.

LUKE xiii. 16.

And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day?

YOU will soon see the occasion and connection of these words, by viewing over the whole paragraph to which they belong: "And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. When Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said to her, Woman thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath-day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries where ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him." *ch.* xiii. 10—17.

Inasmuch as our blessed Lord spake these words, and did the thing which occasioned them, upon that which was, with the Jews, their sabbath-day; it cannot be unfit for us to consider them upon ours, they so fitly leading us to consider also another release, wrought for a daughter of Abraham too, on our sabbath-day. It was formerly told you upon what occasion, and I doubt not but you generally know upon whose account, we were to divert from our usual course and subject at this time. Nor

could any thing have been more suitable to the present occasion; for not only was this daughter of Abraham released from her infirmity upon the sabbath-day, but the time wherein it remained upon her, in a great and manifold complication, was (as her surviving consort hath acquainted me, and who therefore recommended this subject) precisely about eighteen years.

There are, it is true, disagreements between our case, and that case in the text, which do not therefore render both together less instructive to us, but the more. And, to make way to what may be so, you must here take notice, that these words are part of our Lord's defence of what he had done in performing this work of mercy, wherein what he says is justly severe, and very clearly convictive. It is very deserved and just severity, that he called him who cavilled in the case by his own true name, Thou hypocrite. He, under pretence of great sanctity, discovers the highest enmity, even against our blessed Lord himself, who came (being sent) upon the holiest and kindest design into this world. The zeal which he pretends for the observation of the sabbath, could not be the thing that he did really mean, or that acted him in this case; for it was not likely he could be ignorant of what was a known adjudged case among the Jews (as some of their own rabbies * inform us) that all needful endeavours ought to be used for the cure of the sick upon the sabbath-day; so as that he very well knew no rule could be broken in this case. But this he reckons was somewhat plausible, and he pleases himself in it, that he could tell how to vent his spite against Christ and Christianity, under a mock-show of great sanctimony. And our Lord justly calls him what indeed he was, when he would thus seem what he was not. It was not that he cared for religion, or for any thing of real sanctity, of which a due and just observation of the sabbath was a real part; but that he had a mind, as far as conveniently he could, to express his displeasure at that evidence and lustre, wherewith the glorious works our Lord wrought evinced him to be the Messiah; while yet he was struck with that awe of him, that he adventures not to direct his reproof to him, but the people.

It is here, by the way, to be noted, that *they* were not thus disaffected to our Lord, and the religion he was about to introduce; no, but this ceremonious bigot, a ruler of the synagogue, was the ill-pleased, disaffected person.

I shall not trouble you with the discussion what sort of power it was that belonged to that office. Some well acquainted with the Jewish writings, say that the ruler of the synagogue was

* Vid Maimon. Constitut. de Fundam. c. v. 9, cum Abrav. N 13, 14. And, as our own Dr. Lightfoot says upon that question of our Lord's, "Is it lawful to heal upon the sabbath-day?" (quoting divers more of theirs to that purpose) he violated not the sabbath so much as their own canons allowed. See his works, vol. ii.

not wont in himself to officiate, as minister *in sacris;* but his business was *circa sacra*, to regulate the administration. We consider not his power, but his will and enmity against Christ and true religion. The people in the mean time, thronged after him in multitudes, and beheld the great works he wrought with joy, and glorified God. Only where was more power, and probably more knowledge, there was more too of a peevish spite and envy, that the interest of our Lord was, by so proper means, growing in the world. A sad (and not a new) thing! that religion should have most opposition, whence it should have most of countenance and advantage to dilate and spread itself. "Do any of the rulers believe on him?" But the people (whom they despised, and pronounced accursed for that reason) were more apt and forward to receive the gospel, John vii. 48, 49. The more there is of light, unaccompanied with a pious inclination, the higher, the more intense and fervent, the finer and more subtle is the venom and malice against Christ and real Christianity.

But our Lord was not diverted from his kind and compassionate design, by any such obstructions as these. His love triumphs over them, and he makes that discovery of his compassion which could not but carry the clearest conviction with it; as his reproof carried the brightest justice. Why, what saith he? Do not any of you loose an ox, or an ass, from the stall on the sabbath-day? and shall I not loose a daughter of Abraham? It is like she was a daughter of Abraham, not only as being a Jewess, but as being a believer, as being, according to Scripture language, of Abraham's seed in the spiritual sense, as well as the natural, and he was the more peculiarly compassionate upon that account; and yet more, because her ail proceeded from the malignant influence of the devil. Shall not I loose such a one whom Satan hath bound, that great enemy of mankind? Why should not I show myself so much the more a friend, by how much the more he appears an enemy, and give the earliest relief the matter can admit?

It is very true, indeed, his compassion was never to incline him to do unfit and unseasonable things, or things that were no way subservient to his principal end; but such a subserviency being supposed, his relief must be with the earliest, to-day before morrow, though it were the sabbath-day. And so now you have the ground of discourse plainly in view before you: that the devil cannot be more maliciously intent to afflict those that relate to God, (even, when it is in his power, with bodily distempers) than our Lord Jesus is compassionately willing to relieve them, without distinction of time, when it shall be consistent with, and subservient to, his higher and greater purposes. In speaking to this, I shall,—

I. Touch briefly upon what is here expressed in the text, the hand that Satan may have in the afflictions, yea, and in the bodily distempers of men, and even of them that belong to God among them.

II. What hand our Lord Jesus has in their relief and releasement.

III. How far we may understand, or may reasonably expect, his compassion to influence him, in such cases.

IV. I shall show that however the release be wrought, it is done very mercifully towards them that belong peculiarly to God.

V. And so make use of all.

I. Somewhat briefly as to that first query: What hand it is supposable the devil may have in the afflictions of men, and more particularly of them that belong to God; as that woman being a daughter of Abraham, was to be considered, as one within the compass of God's covenant, and not improbably as one that, in the strictest sense, was in covenant with God.

1. It is plain, in the text, the devil had a direct hand in her distemper, called a spirit of infirmity. There were more evident and more frequent instances of this kind in that time; the devil then setting himself more openly to contend against the incarnate Son of God, upon his more open appearance to rescue and recover an apostate world from under his dominion and tyranny. But as to more ordinary cases we may further consider,—

2. That the devil is a constant enemy to mankind, apt and inclined, as far as God permits him, to do men all the mischief he can.

3. That as he first introduced sin into the world, so he hath, by consequence, all the calamities that afflict it. There had been no death, sickness, or distemper upon the bodies of men, but from hence. Consider the devil therefore, as the prince and leader of the apostacy, who first drew man into transgression, and thereby rendered him liable to the justice of his Maker, turned his paradise into a desert, and a region of immortal, undecaying life into a valley of sickly languishings and death itself. So may he be said to have had a remoter hand in binding not only this daughter of Abraham, but every child of Adam, in all the afflictions, maladies, and distempers which befall them here; and finally in the bonds of death too, whereof he is said to have had the power, (Heb. ii. 14, 15:) though the children of the second Adam (with whom, for this purpose, he was partaker of flesh and blood, and became with them a son of Abraham, and of his seed) are, by being so bound, released and made free both from death and the bondage of fearing it, to which they were otherwise subject all their days; as we shall further see anon.

4. Though God do not ordinarily allow him more power, yet we may well suppose him to have more malice against these children of Abraham, (who thereby pass into the account of his own children also,) being more intent upon vexing and afflicting whom he apprehends or suspects he shall never be able to destroy; and always apt to use all the power shall be allowed to him, to this mischievous purpose. We find that the afflictions of the people of God, in other kinds, and even in this kind, are expressly often attributed to the devil. In other kinds: "Satan shall cast some of you into prison," (Rev. ii. 10.) and divers think that thorn in the flesh, which the apostle suffered, (2 Cor. xii.) was some acute bodily pain; and he says expressly, "It was a messenger of Satan, sent to buffet him." He, it is said, smote Job with the tormenting boils that afflicted him so grievously and so long, and brought the other calamities upon him that you read of in his story.

5. And again it is further to be considered, that whereas in all diseases the morbific matter, whether immediate in men's bodies, or remoter in the encompassing air, differs not from other matter, otherwise than only in the various disposition, figuration, and motion of parts and particles, whereof it is made up; inasmuch as the devil is called "the prince of the power of the air," we know nothing to the contrary, but that he may frequently so modify that as that it shall have most pernicious influences upon the bodies of men; and upon those especially, so far as God permits, that he has any greater malice against.

6. And again, (supposing this) it is not a stranger thing that God should permit him to afflict the bodies of them that belong to him, than to disturb their minds. Sure their bodies are not more sacred. If we should suppose that he may some way or other perniciously agitate the humours in human bodies, it is no harder a supposition than that he should so variously form the images in the fancy, by which he tempts; for herein surely he comes nearer us, and is more inward to us.

7. Nor is it less supposable that God should, in some instances, permit the devils to follow their inclinations in afflicting his people, than wicked men to follow theirs, which, in the general, carry them to the same thing; when he knows how to turn the one to after-advantage, as well as the other. But we have no ground to think, notwithstanding all this, that the wisdom and goodness of Providence will ordinarily permit that this agency of the devil, in the mentioned cases, shall be altogether in a contra-natural way; but only by so moving and acting with natural causes, that he may be also obviated, through the ordinary blessing of God, by natural means and causes too. Much less is it reasonable that diseases should be themselves reckoned very devils, as was the opinion of the Gnostics of old,

wherein they much concurred with the Manichees; whom, together with them, the more honest-minded pagan Plotinus so copiously confutes:—(though that was more anciently a common opinion, the Septuagint's rendering the word that signifies *plague* by the word δαιμόνιον, in several places of Scripture, seems to intimate. But the commonness of such an opinion, in a dark time, signifies nothing to sway ours this way or that.) But whatsoever hand the devil may be supposed to have in their afflictions or sicknesses, that belong to God, we are,—

II. Sure that our Lord Jesus has a most kind hand (whensoever it is) in their release, which though it were here in a more extraordinary and immediate way, and beside the course of nature, the disparity in this case signifies nothing to the lessening of the favour towards those whom he vouchsafes to relieve in other cases; for the influence that he has in ordinary cases is as truly divine. If the cure of a diseased person be wrought, by his blessing upon ordinary natural means; his co-operating with nature is less amazing, but not less effectual, or less kind; as also the efflux from God is (for his own part) as real, when he works with second causes, as without them; and as immediately reaches the effect, in both the senses of immediateness, whereof so much noise is made in the schools.

And, we must further know, our Lord Christ is now the universal Regent of all nature, even as he is the Christ, the world being devolved into his hands, and all power being given to him both in heaven and earth. He is Lord of all; when, therefore, any of you are sick, it is by his disposal if you are recovered out of that sickness. Nor is his agency less or lower, whether it be by blessing a medicine, or working a miracle; his power and love are the same either way. And know there is an honour, and acknowledgment due from Christians to their great crucified Lord, who hath founded a dominion over this world in his blood, who died, and revived, and rose again, that he might be Lord of living and dead. Therefore you are to reckon you are beholden to Christ for all your recoveries, and all your refreshings that you meet with, amidst the many infirmities and frailties of this your present mortal state.

And if the release be by death, as the case is which we now have specially to do with, that universal power of his over all lives, must be understood immediately to reach to that case too. It is he that measures lives, that lengthens them out, and cuts them shorter at his own pleasure. And as to those that are more peculiarly his own, it is a more peculiar and favourable superintendency that he has over that affair, even of their very dying. Their death is precious in his sight. He with a most gentle tender hand unties the knot of man, releases and

receives the dislodging soul: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," as dying Stephen speaks. But,—

III. We are to consider how far our Lord Jesus' compassion concerns him in such cases; or wherein that may move him to interpose in them, so as in this case he did.—And here two things are to be asserted—That his compassion has not supreme and principal influence in this case; and—That yet it hath real influence.

1. That it hath not *supreme* or principal influence in such cases. And this doth really require to be more principally insisted on, as of greater importance to narrow, terrene minds, that are apt to measure all things by themselves, and in reference to their own little sphere and compass; and to themselves only in their present state, as they are inhabitants of this minute spot of earth; as if all things ought to bend and yield to their present convenience and accommodation here: whereupon they wonder when they are sick, and in pain, God doth not presently relieve and ease them; and think they should do so for any friend, or neighbour, if it were in their power.

Know, therefore, it was not from compassion, as the solitary, or as the chief inducement, that our Lord did work this release for this daughter of Abraham. That cannot be supposed, for he can never be understood to make a creature, and the advantages of a creature, his supreme end. That would have been to invert the order of things, to dethrone God, and deify man, and had been itself a real sort of that idolatry which was one among the many horrid evils which he purposely came to redress, and give remedy to, in this apostate, degenerate world. He had a greater inducement, *i. e.* that he might diffuse the glory of God among the children of men; and that he might give evidence thereby to the truth of his own mission, and prove most convincingly that he was the Messiah, the Son of God, the very person that was anointed, and sent about that great undertaking, to recover God's rights in this lapsed world, to bring about a reconciliation between God and men. And upon this account, when he wrought cures upon men's bodies, it was out of a higher compassion to their souls. And though even this itself, of saving men's souls, was not his highest design, but the glory of God, (as we shall see further by and by) yet it being truly designed by him, and more principally than their bodily ease and relief, this was an apt means to this his lower end. For whereas, in order to this, he was to manifest himself a divine Saviour; it was requisite he should give a joint and an equal demonstration of the two things which his being so implies, his Godlike power and love. The former alone it did not serve his purpose to show, which he might have shown as

much by inflicting plagues on men's bodies, as working cures; by striking them with blindness, lameness, &c. as by giving them sight and soundness. But it was necessary to his end his miracles should be beneficent, and that he should (as it is elsewhere said in the evangelical story he did) go about doing good, and not make men afraid of him, by showing the power of a God in destructive strokes and judgments; but (which became a Saviour) express a divine good-will towards men, and thereby make his way into their hearts, bring them to understand and own a Saviour; and as such to fall in and comply with his kind design towards them. And this, as it served to exalt God in the world, chiefly induced him to work this present cure. If his compassion towards a poor afflicted woman, labouring under bodily infirmity, were his principal inducement; if, therefore, she must be presently cured out of hand, even on the sabbath-day, because she had been now bound eighteen years; why, I pray you, was she to have been bound eighteen years? or why bound at all? His divine knowledge of the case, and power to have redressed, or prevented it, had as well served his compassionate inclination long before. Or why was not such a course formerly set on foot, and continued in the world, that men might be cured of blindness, deafness, lameness, fevers, dropsies, or whatsoever other maladies, easily, and by speaking a word, in any former time? Why was it deferred to this time? Or why hath not such a course been kept afoot ever since his ascension? Hath heaven rendered him less merciful and compassionate? Is it so unkind, and ill-natured a place? It is true that his apology for the cure he now wrought, to this ruler of the synagogue, seems to have no higher reference; nor was he bound, unseasonably, to declare his utmost end and design, to a prejudiced, malicious enemy. That was to speak itself, to shine by its own light, and by such means and methods as these, gradually to make its own way into less obstructed minds, insensibly sliding in upon them: which might better be done (time being given at leisure to consider things) by the real evidence which his works carried with them, than by industrious and often repeated verbal commentaries and expositions.

He sometimes spake it out expressly, as he thought fit, to competent and more prepared hearers, that his great design was to make himself and his errand be understood; who he was, and what he came into the world for; that he was the Son of God, the promised Messiah, and that his business was to save them that were lost; and to restore God's interest in an apostate, lost world, whose rights were to be cared for in the first place. He "redeemed us *to God* by his blood," (Rev. v. 9,) or for the glory of God, as he summed it up in the case of Lazarus, when

he was told of his being sick, (John xi. 4,) "This sickness is not unto death," *i. e.* it was not to terminate in a continuing death, "but for the glory of God, that the Son of man might be glorified;" the same account which this evangelist gives of all these his great works, and why they were recorded, that "we might believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God," &c. *ch.* xx. 30. And, otherwise, was it so considerable a thing, that a man well got out of this fearful gulf, as Lazarus now was, should be fetched back again; that so mighty a wonder should be wrought; that the enclosure of the grave should be torn open, and the released soul should be again drawn down, as a bird escaped caught back into its former confinement, to converse a while longer amidst the impurities of a world lying in wickedness, and with shadows, in a world the fashion whereof passes away?

No, miracles were not so cheap things. We may observe the great and wise God hath, for great and weighty reasons, been always very sparing in making very observable innovations upon nature, or any considerable changes in the ordinary course and method of natural causes and their operations, as a thing less suitable to a state of probation, wherein men were to be held in this world: and hath only been wont to do it where the inconvenience was to be balanced by preponderating greater reasons; which might as much require that he should depart from the fixed rule sometimes, as other reasons might that he should not do it often. It was equally necessary that miracles should not be common, as that there should be any wrought at all; and in great part for the same reason. For if they were common, they must lose the only design for which they could be at all useful. If God should do, in this kind, what is not necessary, he should the less effect by it that which is; inasmuch as they are only useful as they are strange, and, in the natural way, unaccountable. But there is nothing so great in this kind, but ceases to be thought strange if it be common; otherwise, is not the forming of the eye in itself as great a thing as to give sight to the blind? Or the framing such a world as this, as great a thing as the most stupendous miracle that ever was wrought in it?

It was indeed necessary, somewhat extraordinary should at first be done, to demonstrate that man, Jesus of Nazareth, to be the Son of God; which it was impossible should otherwise be known. When that was fully done, it was not necessary there should still be a repetition of miracles, from age to age, to prove the former were wrought, or the truth of the narratives which reported them. That was sufficiently to be known, in the ordinary way, as other matters of fact are, or other history, about which there is no doubt made among men. And the

history of these things has greater advantages to recommend it to the certain belief of after time, than most that ever were writ besides, upon many accounts. It was indeed most becoming the majesty, wisdom, and goodness of God, (taken together) to do what might answer the real necessities of men, whom he was designing to save; but not to indulge their curiosity, nor their unaccountable dulness, sloth, or prejudice, whereby they may be unapt to inquire about, or receive plain things.

Therefore miracles were to be done as rarities, sometimes, not at all times; and at such a time, and upon such an occasion; most of all, to notify, and signalize the Redeemer, at his first appearance, to draw men's eyes upon him, that they might take notice of him, and demean themselves towards him accordingly. This was to be done sufficiently once for all. And the great stupidity of the world made a matter which needed some supernatural evidence, need so much in that kind: "except you see signs and wonders, you will not believe." And if he did so far comply with the necessity of degenerate humanity, as to give once some signal convictive evidence that he was the Christ; the divine wisdom would take care it should not be so often done, as to become trivial, and insignificant to its proper end; the importance whereof was such, as that it ought to transcend any regard to the welfare of men's bodies, but not to exclude it. Which we now come briefly to show, in the next place, *viz.*—

2. That though compassion towards an infirm creature, under bodily distemper, was not the principal inducement unto this cure, it was a real one. Our Lord doth really compassionate the frailties of those that relate to him, while they dwell in mortal flesh. He himself bears our sicknesses. He has a tenderness towards them, even while he doth not think it fit actually to release and set them free; which makes way to what was proposed, in the last place, to be insisted on, as preparatory to the intended use.

IV. That in what way soever our Lord Jesus works a release for them that are most specially his own, from their bodily distempers, he doth it in mercy to them. He lets their afflictions continue upon them in mercy; greater mercy, indeed, than would be in an unseasonable deliverance. But when he sees it a fit season to give them a release, that is an unquestionable mercy too; though it be not in such a way as appears such to vulgar eyes.

It is more easily apprehensible to be from compassion, if he relieves a poor, pained, weak, languishing, sickly creature, by giving renewed strength, and ease, and health in this world. But when the release is by death, as in the case we have under our farther present consideration, it is hard to persuade that

this is done in mercy, that there is compassion in this case. There is, it is true, in this manifest disparity, but not a disadvantageous one. Is it a less thing to release a holy soul from the body, than from bodily distempers? It can only be so in the opinion of such blind moles of the earth as the children of men are now generally become. But let the case be considered according to its true and real import. Why, a recovery from sickness is but an adjournment of death, it is but death deferred awhile. When there is a release wrought in such a way as this, in which hers was wrought whom God hath lately taken from amongst us, here is a cure, not only of one bodily distemper, but of all; not only of actual diseasedness, but of the possibility of ever being diseased more; here is a cure wrought, not only of infirmity, but of death, for the saints conquer death by suffering it; yea, a cure, not of death only, but of mortality, of any liableness to death, so as it can never touch them more: yea, further, not only of bodily diseases, but of spiritual too, far worse, and more grievous than all bodily diseases whatsoever; a cure of blindness of mind, deadness and hardness of heart, of all indispositions towards God, his ways, and presence, towards the most spiritual duties, and the best, and most excellent of our enjoyments. The body of sin, and the mortal body are both put off together. The imprisoned soul is set free, and enters upon a state of everlasting liberty; is released from the bands of death, of whatsoever kind; and in the highest, fullest sense, shall reign in life through Jesus Christ. What is the decease of a saint, but the translation out of a valley of death, a Golgotha, a place of skulls, a region where death reigns, into the region of perfect and everlasting life? It is not to be called death simply or absolutely, but with diminution; it is death only in a certain respect, when, in a higher and much more considerable respect, it is a birth rather, a dying out of one world, and a being born at the same time into another, a much more lightsome, a purer, and more glorious world. The soul is cured in a moment, of whatsoever was grievous or afflicting to it; and the body put into a certain way of cure; of being made, from an earthly, mean, mortal thing,—heavenly, spiritual, incorruptible, and immortal;—from a vile, a glorious body, like Christ's own, and by that power by which he can subdue all things to himself, Phil. iii. 21.

V. And now for use.

1. Learn that there is no inconsistency in the case, that the same person should be at once the subject of long continued bodily affliction, and of divine compassion. These are reconcilable things; sickly languishings under which one may be ready to fail, and compassions that fail not. This is a common theme, but the due consideration of it is too little common. Let it

now be considered, with impartial equity, and with deep seriousness. Do you think the all-comprehending mind of the Son of God now first began to pity this daughter of Abraham? While he was not yet ascended this attribution is given him, otherwise, no doubt, than as a false compliment; "Lord, thou knowest all things." Since his ascension, we are assured he hath a feeling of our infirmities, so as to be touched with them, a continuing sympathy, remembering the inconveniences of that state he had passed through, (as she once, *non ignara mali, &c.*) and is always ready, therefore, to do the part of a faithful and merciful high priest. Before his descent, we must, with equal reason, suppose him to have an entire prospect of the sad case of wretched mortals, in this miserable world of ours. What else made him descend? And after that he was descended, this mark could not but lie still before the eye of his divine mind, to which all his works were known from the beginning of the world. Yet the cure is deferred, the release is not given till the appointed season. When it is the case of any of you to be afflicted with long sickness, and to feel the tediousness of a lingering disease, (count upon it that it may be so, as it is like it hath been with divers of you) do not then permit the matter to the censure of an incompetent, partial judge. If you consult flesh and blood, if sense be to pronounce in the case and give judgment, how hard will it be to persuade that you are not neglected in your languishings, that your groans and faintings are unpitied, though you are so plainly told, that "whom the Lord loves, he chastens?" Are you not ready to say, How can this stand with being, at the same time, the object of divine pity? If he pity me, would he let me lie and languish thus, in so miserable a plight, day after day, and year after year? Yes, these things very well agree, and I would fain shortly evince to you that they do.

(1.) His compassion may sufficiently be evidenced in another kind, and by another sort of instances. Sure it will speak compassion, if he frequently visit his frail infirm creatures, and by his visitation preserve their spirits; if he support them, if he refresh them, this is grace. "My grace shall be sufficient for thee," saith he to the great apostle, when he refused to release him from that thorn in the flesh, that messenger of Satan that did buffet him.

(2.) Besides, compassion may appear by this kind of dispensation itself. It may not only carry that with it, but in it, which may show good-will. If long continued affliction may be supposed to proceed from compassion, it doth much more consist with it. It may proceed from compassion, and bear the relation to it of an effect to the cause. We find it expressly so said in Scripture, and who can so truly speak God's mind as himself? He afflicts in very faithfulness, and as many as the

Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives; Prov. iii. 12, quoted, Heb. xii. 5, 6; Rev. iii. 19. Affliction must be the effect of his real and most sincere good-will and compassion, though of long continuance, if it be apt and intended to do you good, in higher and in greater regards than those wherein you suffer. Or if the good your affliction does you, or is fitly designed to do you, be of a nobler and more excellent kind, than that whereof it deprives you; it must be understood, not only to be consistent with kindness and good-will, but to be produced of it. For the same principle that intends the end, must also intend the proper means that serve to effect it. Now the kind of this good is thus to be estimated. You read, (Ps. ciii. 13,) "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him." "As a father." The relation he is in to them, is that of a father to his children. But we must understand, under what notion he is related; and we are told, (Heb. xii. 9, 10,) "Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not then much rather be in subjection to the Father of our spirits and live? For they, verily, for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." We have here an account where the relation terminates, and see both the object of his more special kindness and good-will, which accompany the relation, and the end of it. He is the Father of their spirits, whence, therefore, we may collect, the object of that love which goes with the relation, must be their spirits also; the end of it is their spiritual advantage, to make them partakers of his own holiness. His holiness is a lofty word, and carries the matter high. Understanding it soberly, (as we may be sure it was meant) it must signify the holiness which he hath himself impressed, and the impression whereof is the lively resemblance and image of his own. And is not this a good of a nobler and more excellent kind, than we can lose by a sickness? better than the ease of this vile flesh, that was made out of dust, and tends thither? The object is their spirits, for there the kindness that belongs to the relation must terminate, where the relation terminates. "How much more shall we not be subject to the Father of our spirits and live?" The Father of our spirits is there contradistinguished from the fathers of our flesh. God is not the father of our flesh, but the Father of our spirits; he is the Creator of our flesh too, our flesh is his creature, but not his offspring. There must be a similitude and likeness of nature between a father and a child, which there is not necessarily between a maker and the thing made. In respect of our spiritual part, we are his offspring; and he is so a Father to us, both as the souls of men in common bear his natural image, and,

if they be regenerate, as they bear his holy image too. And the case may be so, that the suffering of our flesh is necessary for the advantage of our spirits. Our flesh may suffer so as that the spirit shall be the better for it; and then pity itself, compassion itself must not only permit, but cause and produce, such a course of dispensation, as whereby that end shall be attained, the making us partakers of his holiness. So the apostle speaks of his own case: "Though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." 2 Cor. iv. 16. Though our outward man perish. We are compassed about with deaths, that are continually beating down the walls of this outward man; they are beating upon it, and are likely to infer its perishing; and if it perish, let it perish, I am not solicitous (*q. d*) about that; if it must come down, let it come down. In the midst of all these outward assaults, our inward man is renewed day by day, gathers a fresh and increasing strength and vigour, whilst this outward man is tending to dissolution and dust. And several ways such continued afflictions upon the outward man, may make for the advantage of the inward man in the best kind.

[1.] As they withdraw, and take off the mind and heart from this world, a debasing and defiling thing; and which transforms the soul, that converses too much with it, into a dunghill; fills it with ill savour. But what doth all this world signify to a sickly, pained person?

[2.] As it engages them to be much in prayer. Nothing is more suitable, than that an afflicted life be a life of much prayer. "Is any man afflicted, let him pray." James v. 13. Much affliction hath a natural aptitude to incline men this way. "In their affliction they will seek me early." Hos. v. 15. It is a dictate of nature, even when grace, as yet, hath no possession; but which, through God's blessing, may, by this means, help to introduce it. For it urges the soul Godward, who is the God of all grace; obliges it to converse with him, whereby somewhat better may be gained than is sought. In their afflictions they will be submissive and lie at my feet, saith God; they will seek me early, from whom, otherwise, I should never hear, it may be, all their life long. O that you would understand the matter so, when God afflicts in such kinds, so as his hand touches your very bone and flesh; this is the design of it, to make you pray, to bring you upon your knees, to put you into a supplicating posture: if he can, upon any terms, hear from you, though you seek him but for bodily ease and refreshing, it may be a means of the greatest advantage to you, ere God have done with you, when once he has brought you, by this means, to treat; when he has got you into a more tractable disposition, there is hope in the case. If thus he open your ear to discipline, and be to you an interpreter, one of a thousand, to show you his righteous-

ness, he may seal instruction to you, and save your soul from going down to the pit, having found a ransom for you." Job xxxiii. 15, &c.

But for those that have a real interest in God, and union with Christ, that which occasions much prayer is likely to be the means of much spiritual improvement and advantage to them.

[3.] It puts several suitable graces upon exercise, and by being exercised they grow. It tries their *faith*, and improves it. Faith is, in such a case as this, necessarily called forth into act, if there be the principle; and as it acts, it grows, and becomes more and more strong and lively. Their *patience* is exercised by it, and perfected; and that has a great influence upon their universal perfection. "Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect." Jam. i. 2—4. There will be a universal languor (as if he should have said) upon your spirits, if you be impatient; if you cannot suffer, (as patience is an ability for suffering); if you can by no means endure, without tempestuous agitations, or sullen despondencies of spirit. But if patience have its perfect work, that will infer a universal healthfulness and good habit into your whole soul. Their *love* to God is, in such a case, eminently tried and improved. "Blessed is the man that endures temptation, (tentative affliction is there meant, as above, *v.* 2,) for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him," (Jam. i. 12,) which implies, their love to him is the great thing put upon trial, in that case. And it is a great trial of love to God, a very improvable opportunity of discerning its sincerity, when, upon a long affliction, you can appeal to God, and say: "Thou knowest I love thee; though thou smite and kill, I will still love thee. No discontentful motion, no repining thought shall ever be allowed a place in my breast; there may be sighs, but no murmurings; groans, but no tumults; nothing of displeasure against thy holy pleasure."

[4.] It occasions such to live much upon the borders of eternity. Under affliction we look not to the things that are seen and temporal, but to the things that are unseen and eternal; which make us count our affliction, though long, but momentary. 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. And those souls will prosper and flourish that have so unspeakably more to do with the other world, than with this. It is in this way that the afflictions of this present state do "work for us the far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory," (*v.* 17,) as they direct our eye forward, "while we look, (*v.* 18) not to the things that are seen, which are but temporal; but to the things that are unseen, and eternal." Life and spirit, strength and vigour enter, *q. d.* at our eye, which is prompted, by the horror of frightful spectacles in this scene

of things, to look to another, where all things appear lightsome, pleasant, and glorious.

There are other considerations, whereby you might argue to yourselves not only the consistency, but the great suitableness of an afflicted state in this world, with God's favour, kindness, and compassion towards you: as that when he is more highly provoked, he threatens *not to afflict*, as the heaviest of penalties; "Why should they be smitten any more?" (Isa. i. 5:) "I will no more punish your daughters," &c. (Hos. iv. 14:) "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone," (*v.* 17:)—that his covenant obliges him to it, as to them who are on stricter terms in covenant with him; Christ's own seed being signified by David's; as by David is manifestly Christ himself, (Ps. lxxxix.) where you may see how, and after what tenor his covenant runs. *v.* 30—34. According whereto he himself elsewhere acknowledges, that in very faithfulness God had afflicted him, (Ps. cxix. 75:)—that in experience, we are apt to grow remiss, secure and negligent, when all things are externally well with us; and let us but appeal to ourselves, how much a wakeful temper of spirit, under affliction, is better than carelessness, and vanity of mind, accompanied with fleshly ease and pleasure:—that we can ourselves easily apprehend, that it may not only consist with the tenderness of a parent to have the wound of a child searched, though with much pain; but proceed from it:—that in heaven our judgment of things will be right and incorrupt, where we shall apprehend no cause of complaint, that through many sicknesses, diseases, and death itself, our way was made for us thither. And if that shall then be a true judgment, the thing itself must be as true now. But these I hastily hint, and pass to some further use.

2. We may next collect, that since it is out of doubt the devil may have some hand in our outward affliction; we are concerned to take so much the more care, that he may not have his end upon us by it. A hand he may have, and we cannot determine how far; but whether it be more or less, great care we are concerned to take how to frustrate his design. He has the most mischievous ends that can be, and designs worse things to us than the affliction, which is the means, whatsoever that be. He would fain engage us in a controversy with God, would have us contend with him, murmur, fret, blaspheme and curse God; and therewith send out our last, and dying breath. That was his design upon Job. Let us labour to frustrate it as he did. Divers of the ancients (Justin Martyr, Jerome, Cyprian, and Austin) speak much to this purpose, how great a design the devil drives in being the author of sicknesses and diseases to men, that he might make them apply themselves to him, and divert from God; as that wicked prince did, whom by the pro-

phet we find so sharply reproved for it, as if there were no God in Israel, that he went to the God of Ekron, (some demon or other, as we have reason to think.) The last-mentioned of these authors speaks of it as just matter of excommunication, when those that bear the name of Christians shall, in such cases, use means bearing no natural proportion or accommodateness to the end, charms, spells, &c. for ease, or cure of maladies; wherein no relief could reasonably be expected, but from the devil's agency, who may be officious enough, if especially he have first hurt, to heal too, that by practising upon their bodies, he may entangle their souls; and (according to his wont of running counter to God, who wounds that he may the more effectually heal and save) by a present temporary cure, wound mortally, and finally destroy.

He hath not left the world (no, not the Christian world) quite ignorant of his methods in these kinds, of training men, by gradual steps, into things, first, that seem innocent, and then into such familiarities, (whether their real distress, or their curiosity were the first handle he took hold of them by, or the engine by which he drew them) till, at length, it comes to express covenanting. If the matter come not so far, it is rare to come off from the least tamperings without a scratch. "He that is born of God, keeps himself, that the evil one may not touch him," (1 John v. 18,) as knowing he designs to touch mortally, and, if he touch, to kill. If it proceed so far as a solemn league, how tragical consequences doth story abound with! That of Count Matiscon (plucked away by the devil from among divers persons of quality, whom he was entertaining, and at noon-day, whirled in the air three times about the city, in open view of the people, to whom he in vain cried for help) reported by some historians; and that of an infamous magician of Saltzburg, and divers others, are instances both very extraordinary, and very monitory. But as to a future ruin, which he finally aims to involve men in, with himself; he hath not faster hold of any, than those that have learnt to ridicule every thing of this kind, and who have put so much sadducism into their creed, (consisting of so many negatives, or things they believe not, that they scarce leave enough positive to admit that name) as to think there is no such creature, perhaps as being conscious there can be no worse than themselves. But how near is he to them that think him out of the universe!

3. Since it is possible the devil may bind even those that belong to God, with some kind of bodily affliction or other, it is the more to be apprehended how much worse bonds they are, in which he binds those that do not belong to him. O that you would be serious here! How many such sad cases are there amongst even them, as may be feared, that are called

Christians, concerning which it may be said, here is a soul that Satan hath bound, not eighteen, but, it may be, thirty, forty, fifty years! O when shall this soul be released, that Satan hath so long bound!

4. As from the devil's malice to the bodies of men, we may collect his greater malice to their souls; so we may judge proportionably of Christ's compassions, that as they incline him to give them all suitable relief in their bodily afflictions, as far as can consist with those measures which infinite wisdom hath pitched upon for the government of this present world, and as shall fall in with the design of his office of a Redeemer and Saviour to us, so they much more incline him to relieve embondaged souls. For this doth most directly fall in with his design, and is the proper business of his office; the other may be only collateral to it, and as it were to be done on the bye. He came not into this world to procure that men might not be sick, or pained, or be presently restored to health and ease; but he came, and died, that souls might live; to procure for them pardon, reconciliation with God, all needful assisting influences of grace, and eternal life. Of these, therefore, they may be most assured, if they duly apply themselves. And some encouragement to expect so much, they may draw even from this instance. This infirm woman, in order to bodily cure, did apply herself to him; she came after him, as others did, for this purpose; and did, in a sort, put herself in the way of his healing influence. Now if any of you find your souls are yet held by the devil, in worse bonds, apply yourselves to the merciful, compassionate Jesus; there is hope in the case. O will you not say so much to him for a soul in bondage, "Lord, loose this poor soul of mine, that Satan hath bound for so many sad years?" Do but labour to know you are bound, to feel your bonds. Whatsoever there is of prevailing sin in you, it is a bond by which the devil holds your souls. The wicked are held in the cords of their own iniquities. Prov. v. 23. And sins are said to be the works of Satan, from which it is the design of the Redeemer to loose us. The Son of God was for this purpose manifested, that he might destroy, (we read) it is that he might dissolve the works of the devil, *q. d.* that he might release, and unbind souls that the devil as yet holds in fast bonds. And you may find you are so bound, when upon self-reflection you take notice, you are ordinarily restrained from what you should do, against the light and conviction of your own minds and judgments; *i.e.* you find, if you reflect, a conviction hath taken place in your consciences that you ought to love God, but there is with you no such motion of soul, no inclination towards him; you ought, in a stated course, to pray, and pour out your soul to him, but you are bound, you cannot offer at it, you have no

liberty for it; your terrene inclination, or love to vanity, plucks you back:—you ought to walk in the ways of God, but you are fettered, you cannot move a foot:—you ought to do the works of God, but you are manacled, you cannot stir a hand. Are you so bound, and will you not know it? What! never feel your bonds? When once they are felt, you will soon begin to cry and supplicate. And if once you shall be brought seriously and incessantly to supplicate, it may be hoped the release will follow. Was our Lord so compassionate towards infirm bodies, in the days of his flesh in this world; and do we think he, above, is less compassionate to souls? Can it be thought heaven hath altered him to your disadvantage? Is he less kind, benign, and less apt to do good, now he is enthroned in glory? Why should you not believe he will give release unto your captive, embondaged souls, if you implore his help and mercy, with seriousness, and insist upon it, and do not give him over? Say to him, "Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me;" for do you not know it is his office? The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and opening of prisons to them that are bound." Isa. lxi. 1. What! will you be bound all your days, and never lift up a cry to the great Redeemer and Saviour of souls, to give you release? How deservedly should these bonds end with you in the chains wherein the devils themselves shall for ever be bound with you!

5. We may collect, there is an awful regard due to the Sabbath-day. When our Lord justified the cure now wrought on their sabbath, only on this account, that it was an act of mercy towards a daughter of Abraham; by the exception of such a case he strengthens the general rule, and intimates so holy a day should not, upon light occasions, be otherwise employed than for the proper end of its appointment. Though our day be not the same, the business of it, in great part, is, by the reason given in the fourth commandment; which being placed among the rest of those ten words, so many ways remarkably distinguished from the other laws given the Jews, and signifying that these were intended not to them alone, but to mankind, and given upon a reason common to man; the words also not necessarily signifying more, than there should be a seventh day kept as sacred to God, reserving it to after significations of his pleasure to mark out, and signalize this or that day, as he should see fit. And our Saviour having told us expressly, "The sabbath was made for man," (*i. e.* as men, not for Jews, as Jews,) these considerations taken together, with many more, (not fit to be here mentioned) do challenge a very great regard to the day which we have cause to think it is the will of God we should keep as our Sabbath.

6. That there is somewhat of privilege due, by gracious vouch-

safement and grant, to the children of Abraham, to Abraham's seed, *i. e.* to speak by analogy, to the children of covenanted parents. Abraham is considerable, here, as being, under that notion, a father; whosoever of you, therefore, are the children of such as were of the faith of Abraham, and you are now come to that adult state, wherein you are capable of transacting with God for yourselves, and wherein the *transitus* is made from minority to maturity; if now you own the God of your fathers, if you will now say, "My father's God shall be my God;" he keeps mercy for thousands, of them that love him and keep his commandments, *i. e.* if there were a thousand generations of such, (generations being spoken of so immediately before, *viz.* that he would visit iniquity upon them that hate him, to the third and fourth generation; but show mercy to them that love him, and keep his commandments, unto a thousand generations, that is to never so many) if you will not, when now grown up, disavow your father's God; if you will avow and own him, and devote yourselves to him; he will be your God as well as theirs. Here is now the privilege due to Abraham's children, or to the children of covenanted parents. God has an early preventive interest in them, upon which they may lay their claim to him as their God, if they will but now give up themselves to him, and stand to his covenant. But if you will not do so, but slight and reject the God of your fathers, then your birth privilege can signify nothing to you; then think not to say with yourselves, We have Abraham to our father, (in that 3rd of Matthew's Gospel,) for God will never want children; he is able of stones to raise up children to Abraham; *q. d.* rather stones than you: and then, indeed, upon a true account, Abraham is none of your father; as our Lord Jesus tells the Jews, "if you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham." You do so and so, thus did not Abraham. John viii. 39, 40. Pray consider what Abraham was, and how he lived on earth, like an inhabitant of heaven, as an heir of the heavenly country, his business was to seek the "better country, that is, the heavenly; wherefore God was not ashamed to be called his God;" as in that 11th to the Heb. *v.* 16. But if you will go from day to day grovelling in the dust of the earth, this did not Abraham. If you will spend your lives in the pursuit of vanity and trifles, this did not Abraham. There is a great privilege belonging by gospel grant unto the children of covenanted parents, if they do not forfeit it by neglecting, and practically disavowing their father's God.

7. But I further infer hence, that since this compassion has a real, though not a principal, hand in the release that is given to them that belong to God, in whatsoever way they are released, from all their infirmities, and ails, and afflictions in this

world; it very much becomes, and much concerns, all the children of Abraham patiently to wait for it, in God's own way. Patiently, I say, in God's own way wait for it. The children of Abraham shall be loosened sooner or later, and in one way or other, though very long, though so many years bound by such and such afflicting distempers. You have a great instance of this kind in that daughter of Abraham, whom God hath called away from us. In all the long exercise, the main thing she was ever wont to insist upon, was that in all this affliction she might gain patience, submission, and instruction. And in her later time, when she drew nearer to eternity, was more in view of it, that was the great subject wherewith she entertained herself, and was conversant much with somewhat more lately written upon that subject, as by Mr. Shower, (now known to most of you) and by another author. And last her entertainment, as I have been told, (as to helps from creatures in any such kind) was the repetition of what some of you have heard concerning the Immanuel, wherewith she formerly pleased herself, as being, it is likely, much habituated in the temper of her spirit to the thoughts of him; that having, by agreement with her pious consort, been their motto,* at their first coming together, Immanuel, God with us.

8. I shall only add one instruction more, to shut up all, that since our Lord Jesus hath such an agency, and even with compassion, in the release of those that do belong to him from their afflicting infirmities; we should all of us labour, with a due and right frame and disposition of spirit, to behold any such releasement. It is a great matter to be able to behold instances of that kind, with a right frame of mind and spirit. If one be released by recovery, into ease, health, and strength in this world; it is easily and readily made matter of joy. Is one recovered out of a long and languishing sickness? Friends and relations behold it with great complacency and gladness of heart. But if a godly friend be released by dying, truly we can hardly make ourselves believe that this is a release, or so valuable a release; so much are we under the government of sense, so little doth that faith signify with us, or do its part, that is the substance of what we hope for, and the evidence of what we see not. No! This is to go with us for no release. We look only upon the sensible, *i. e.* upon the gloomy part of such a dispensation, when such a one is gone, released, set at liberty, (as a bird out of the cage or the snare) we can hardly tell how to consider it as a release; we will not be induced to apprehend it so. There are no dispositions, no deportments commonly that suit such an apprehension. And O how unbecoming and incon-

* The posy on their wedding ring.

gruous a thing, when Christ is, in that way, about releasing such a one, to have a holy soul just upon the confines of a glorious, blessed eternity, compassed about with sighs, sobs, tears, and lamentations. How great an incongruity! I have many times thought with myself, the love and kindness of friends and relations is very pleasant in life, but grievous at death. It is indeed, in some respects, a very desirable thing, (if God shall vouchsafe it) to die with one's friends about one. It may be one may need some little bodily relief, in those last hours; besides that, some proper thoughts may be suggested by them, to mingle with one's own. And if God afford the use of reason, and speech, and the supply of his own Spirit, one may possibly, in this last juncture, be a means of some good to them. One may possibly say that that may abide with them, and be of future advantage to them. But in other respects, if the related friendly by-standers cannot duly temper themselves, if they are apter to receive or do more hurt than good, if Christians do not labour to show a truly Christian spirit, in such a case; their presence has very little eligible in it. And, indeed, the deportment even of those that profess Christianity, about their deceasing godly friends, is such for the most part, as if the foundations of all religion were shaken with them; and as if they had a design to shake them too, if possible, in such with whom they are now to part; as if it were to be called in question, whether what God hath said concerning another world, and the blessed state of the innumerable and holy assembly above, be true or no, or were not doubted to be false, and a solemn fiction, invented to delude mortals here on earth.

It is little considered how opposite such a temper of spirit, as commonly appears in us, is to the very design of all Christianity. For doth not the whole of Christianity terminate upon eternity, and upon another state and world? Now do but consider the inconsistences that are to be found in this case, between the carriage and temper of many that profess Christianity, and their very profession itself. They acknowledge, they own that the design of Christ's appearing here in this world, and of his dying upon the cross, was to bring us to God; to bring the many sons to glory. They grant that this is not to be done all at once, not all in a day; but it is to be done by degrees. Here he takes up one, and there another; leaving others still to transmit religion, and continue it on to the end of time. So far they agree with our common Lord, and seem to approve the divine determinations, in all these steps of his procedure. But yet, for all this, if they might have their own will, Christ should not have one to ascend to him, of those for whom he died, and himself ascended to open heaven for them, and to prepare a place for their reception, as their Forerunner, there. I say not one

to ascend after him, for they take up with a general approving of this design of his. Very well! say they, it is fitly ordered, his method is wise, and just, and kind, and let him take them that belong to him, when he thinks fit; only let him excuse my family; let him take whom he will, only let him touch no relation of mine, not my husband, wife, child, brother, sister, take whom he will, but let all mine alone. I agree to all he shall do well enough, only let him allow me my exception. But if every one be of this temper and resolution, for themselves and theirs, according to this tendency and course of things, he shall have none at all to ascend; none to bring with him when he returns. Those that are dead in Jesus, he is to bring with him. No, he should be solitary, and unattended for all them. They, and all their relations, would be immortal upon earth. How ill doth this agree and accord with the Christian scheme and model of things!

But you will say, what! would I persuade you to be indifferent, and not to love and care for your relatives, or be unwilling to part with them? No. All that I persuade to is, that there be a mixture in your temper, and such a mixture, as that the prevailing ingredient therein may agree with the stronger and weightier reason. It is not that I would have love extinguished among relatives, but I would have it moderated and subdued, to that degree as to admit of being governed by superior, greater, and nobler considerations. Do you think Christ did expect, or design, that his disciples should not love him? And yet he tells them, (John xiv. 28,) "If you loved me, you would rejoice that I say I go to my Father." And who in all this world could ever have such a loss, as they of him, dwelling in flesh among them? Yet, says he, "if you loved me, you would rejoice that I say I go to my Father." And when the apostle, visibly tending towards death, by the prediction given concerning him, (Acts xxi. 13,) said to the disciples round about him; "What mean you, to weep, and to break my heart? I am ready, not only to be bound, but to die for the name of Jesus;" if there had not been a faulty excess in the affection they expressed, certainly he would not have rebuked it, he would not have blamed what he thought not blameworthy.

In short, it were desirable (if God see good) to die amidst the pleasant friends and relatives, who were not ill pleased that we lived; that living and dying breath might mingle and ascend together in prayers and praises to the blessed Lord of heaven and earth, the God of our lives; if then we could part with consent, a rational and a joyful consent. Otherwise, to die with ceremony, to die amongst the fashionable bemoanings and lamentations, as if we despaired of futurity; one would say, (with

humble submission to the divine pleasure) "Lord! let me rather die alone, in perfect solitude, in some unfrequented wood, or on the top of some far remote mountain; where none might interrupt the solemn transactions between thy glorious, blessed self, and my joyfully departing, self-resigning soul!"

But in all this we must refer ourselves to God's holy pleasure; who will dispose of us, living and dying, in the best, the wisest, and the kindest way.

A DISCOURSE,

RELATING TO THE MUCH LAMENTED DEATH, AND SOLEMN FUNERAL OF

QUEEN MARY.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

RACHAEL, LADY RUSSELL.

MADAM,

I CAN be at no loss for inducements to prefix your Ladyship's name to this discourse. I know the subject is grateful to you, and if I only give you the occasion hereby of revolving in your mind this sublime context, you will entertain yourself from it with more enlarged and exalted thoughts than this discourse, especially confined within so narrow limits, can suggest.

And your Ladyship knows so much of the incomparable Queen, that you can the more easily believe the rest. I reckon you, Madam, a great frequenter of that assembly above, to which she is now adjoined. You have, besides the greater attractives that are common to all serious Christians, a very peculiar one, to draw your mind often thither. A joint-root with you is there by transplantation, and a noble branch from you both, and in whom two illustrious families meet, is, under your care shooting upwards also. All indeed that have true honour for him, will earnestly covet he may be long serviceable to the most valuable purposes in this world; and that, by the blessing of Heaven upon his approaching nuptials, (with one from whom may be expected all that so sweet and tender a bud, now beginning to open, can promise,) he may, in due time, spread forth many branches, that may flourish here; but it is to be hoped he will be found to have a greater mind than can be confined to so low and little a thing as this earth is.

The thought may much the better be digested, that terrestrial nuptials will some time end in funerals, if once, by God's prescribed methods, it can be made certain to us also that those funerals shall end in celestial triumphs.

Your Ladyship's eyes, (which better serve for heaven than earth) being observably much directed upward, will give aim and direction to theirs who depend upon you, to look the same way; and withal draw down from thence continual blessings upon yourself, and them. Which is the serious desire, and hope of,

Madam,

Your Ladyship's most obedient,

And obliged humble servant,

J. H.

A DISCOURSE.

HEB. xii. 23.

And to the spirits of just men, made perfect.

LET me invite back your eye to the foregoing words, that are in nearer connection with these, (*v.* 22,) "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, (*v.* 23,) to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

We have had this last week a public solemnity, that was becomingly great and magnificent, upon a sad and mournful occasion; the last act of a doleful scene that hath lasted many weeks. You know I have taken notice to you (my usual hearers) of the first, and saddest, the leading part in this tragedy, once and again; nor would I have this last to pass us, without some instructive observation and remark. It will the more instruct us the less it detains us; or if, only taking a due (not, I mean, a slight and too hasty, but yet a transient) notice of it, we be prompted by it to look forward, from what was in its own kind most deservedly great, to what is incomparably greater, in a more excellent kind.

In such a funeral solemnity, for so great and excellent a personage, there is what may most fitly entertain awhile; there is not that which ought finally to terminate a wise and judicious eye. Honours done to the memory of great persons deceased have, by the wisdom of all nations, been counted decencies, and even debts; when especially the deceased have been sometime, and might have been much longer, public blessings; then, indeed, it is that such rites are most fitly (as they are usually) called *justa*. But we are too prone to be taken only with the mere pomp of such spectacles, and, which is the infirmity of our too degenerate spirits, to be wholly possessed with fanciful ideas; as those were intimated to be, which were from a spectacle of

the same common kind, though on a very diverse occasion, by that elegant expression, μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας, Acts xxv. 23, such as do but amuse our imagination awhile, but must of course vanish, and cannot stay long with us. But we need that somewhat greater, and too latent to strike our eye, should another way enter, and teach our mind; making such expressions there, as may claim an abode, and that ought to remain and dwell with us. You read of a very solemn funeral, Gen. l. The whole country into which the march was made was amused at the state and greatness of that mournful cavalcade, wherein it is said, (*v.* 9,) "there were chariots, and horsemen, even a very great company." That which you have many of you so lately seen, and no doubt all of you heard of, was a most august funeral solemnity, such as whereof less concerned foreign spectators might say, as the Canaanites by mistake did of that, (*v.* 11,) "This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians." They were indeed anciently the most celebrated mourners for such as died amongst them, in all the world, in respect of their funeral rites, and of their monuments for the dead, (*Diod. Sic.* lib. 1,) of which they are said to have taken more care than of the habitations of the living; accounting these they were to inhabit only a short time, but those they reckoned their αἰδιους οἰκους, "their eternal habitations:" an imagination, which how wild soever it were of the habitations of souls, (which only could be supposed capable of being pleased with them) yet implied their belief of the immortality, whereof some have, groundlessly, thought them the first assertors. (*Herod. Euterp.*) But the Canaanites were, as was intimated, mistaken in apprehending that to be chiefly an Egyptian mourning. The true Israelites (those that were such indeed) were the true concerned mourners. The father of Israel was dead, as now with us, the mother: a political, though not a natural, nor merely an economical one; a mother, not in the narrower and more minute, but in the larger and most noble sense; not of a single family only, but of nations. The Egyptians assisted to make up the show in that mourning, but were probably the prepared (as their posterity were the active) instruments of the slavery and misery of that people with whom they were now seeming sharers in lamentation.

Ours was a mourning not less grievous than theirs, not more grievous than just to the English nation, *i.e.* to whom the soil and the genius are together native, that are not of an Egyptian spirit; unto which, as things happen, (to its power, or to its impotency) there is a radical innate disposition, either to make slaves, or to be such. There is a sort of people (as was once said) born to slavery, to whom it is a birthright. They have it in their natures, and no other state, as he most aptly spake, (*Plin. Paneg.*) is agreeable or becoming to them: *Quos non decet*

esse nisi servos. They know not what to do with liberty, any more than that silly creature, that used to haunt the dunghill, with the pearl. Therefore they can but suitably value the restorers and assertors of it. No irons can be heavier, or less tolerable to them, than a generous, and a Christian state of freedom. Therefore if none else will do them the kind office to put them into gentler shackles, they grow so unnaturally cruel, as to shackle themselves, in the ignoblest sort of bondage. Prov. v. 22. They are held in the cords of their own sins, and make the chain whereby they are to be dragged.—*Sen. Trag.* Brutish appetites and inclinations are to them severer task-masters, than it can ever be in their power to become to others. They can themselves, at the utmost, but domineer over other men's externals; but these have subdued their wills, and tyrannize in their very minds. Thus is it with them in relation to their governing, and their being governed; and their policy and religion come both out of the same mint. To them this season of sorrow is a time of festivity and laughter, who, when they have suffered a more monstrous transformation themselves, can easily turn the house of mourning into that of mirth. Eccles. vii. 4. The wise man tells us what sort of people they are, whose heart is in this latter house; and what is to be thought of such mirth and laughter. *ch.* ii. 2. And, indeed, without a serious repentance, (by which men do *resipiscere*, or "become wise") theirs is like to prove the sardonic laughter, a certain prelude to death and ruin.

But it is to be hoped this sort of men do dwindle into a not much regardable paucity. The current of the nation runs against them, which must turn and constrain them to fall in with it. For, we had upon the late sad occasion a *panegyris*. We find that word in the introductive part of the text, and though it is more commonly applied to a multitude gathered on other occasions, it disagrees not to that orderly great concourse on that mournful occasion, a general assembly, that is a national one, met then on purpose to mourn; a nation assembled, and mourning in their representative. It was decent it should be so; a loss so national, so general a sorrow, were with no congruity otherwise to be represented and expressed. Our mourning was, therefore, by all the estates of the kingdom; the head only mourning, with greater and more decent majesty, in retirement, or being (as is usual in solemn mournings) hid, and covered on that day. So was the whole legislature concerned in that sorrow, as if it were ordained by statute, or as if our mourning were as that for an excellent prince also, (2 Chron. xxxv. 25,) by an ordinance in our Israel; and as if our tears and lamentations were, as before they were by merit, to be also made due by law! Death marched in state and triumph that day; the

king of terrors took the throne, and filled that part which it had made vacant, having plucked away from thence not only so bright an ornament, but so glorious an instrument in our government; and all the orders of the realm, as captives attended the chariot of the conqueror. England had lost its delight, its pleasant comeliness, and even half its soul. Nothing could correspond to such a case, but a rational groan, as of an half-expiring kingdom, ready almost to breathe its last, and give up the ghost.

It must be confessed, our just tribute to the memory of our admirable Queen can never be said to be fully paid; nor can this discourse leave out occasional reflections that may be of this import. But my present design is to endeavour our minds may be drawn upwards, and to make that improvement of this most instructive Providence, unto which this chosen text will direct. Not to entertain you with her character and praises, (for it is the same thing to characterize, and to praise her) that part is performed in divers excellent discourses, which I have read, as I believe may of you have, and I hope with fruit as well as approbation; and (as there is cause) with great admiration of the divine goodness, that so illustriously shone forth in her, and that vouchsafed, so long, to entrust the people of England with so rare a jewel, whose lustre was yet exceeded by its real virtues. By which also we may make our estimate of the displeasure wherewith it is so soon withdrawn and caught away from us, so as to entertain the age (as our divine Herbert) with—*a mirth but opened, and shut up again*—a burning and a shining light, (for so she also was in a true sense, and in her proper sphere), in the light whereof we rejoiced but a season.

But every such Providence hath its dark side, and its bright. View it downward as it looks upon us who remain beneath, and we behold blackness, and darkness, and a horrible tempest. Such a state of things we may fear our Queen hath left unto us who stay below, while we do so. But look we upon it upwards, whither she is ascended, and whither we are professedly tending, and are in some sort come, if we be followers of them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises; and we find it is to "Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." And hither (that we may fetch instruction out of terror, out of the eater meat, and life out of death) let us bend and apply ourselves.

We have had a mournful, sad solemnity and assembly, though decently pompous and great; England's glory clad in sables,

and glittering in a cloud. But now let us lift up our eye, and endeavour it may penetrate through this darkness, and behold the glorious spectacle which this context presents us with. Funeral solemnities, even for pious and holy persons, and that were of greatest use in the world, are dull and gloomy spectacles, if they are only considered in their retrospection, without prospect; or if they only solemnize their exit out of this world of ours, but be understood to have no reference to their ascent and entrance into the regions of immortality and bliss above. And, without this, we see ourselves outdone by the Egyptians themselves, with whom their funeral apparatus had reference to a subsequent immortality.

These words are allusive, and promiscuously refer partly to things known and famous among the Greeks, but are more principally accommodate to these Christian Israelites, or Hebrews to whom they are writ, and (in a scheme of speech, familiar and well known to them) have respect to their passage out of Egypt, (as the third and fourth chapters of this epistle also have) towards the land of their promised inheritance, whereof the remains of their venerable ancestor and head, holy Jacob, or Israel, had, by divine instinct and direction, in that mentioned solemn funeral procession been conveyed before, to take a sort of typical and prophetical prepossession of it for them. They are in the whole a figure, an allegory, which is expounded, Gal. iii. In their way to their terrestrial Canaan, this people came to Mount Sinai, the emblem of their Jewish church state, under rigorous severities, which they were to pass from; and so shall we. The text expresses what they were come, and were tending to, the representation whereof hath a double reference, intermediate to the state and constitution of the Christian church, and final to the heavenly state; the former being both a resemblance, and some degree of the latter.

"Ye are come (saith he) to Mount Sion," the seat of the sacred temple, the Shecinah, the habitation of the divine presence, not ambulatory, as the tabernacle was while they were journeying through the wilderness, but the fixed residence of the eternal King, where the order of worship was to be continued to the fulness of time; as afterwards in the Christian church it was to be permanent, and unchanged to the end of time; and in the heavenly state unalterable and eternal. And here, in opposition to the case at Mount Sinai, where the people were to stay beneath the mount, (whereas they were to go up to the house of God, on Mount Sion) they are now to ascend, *and be higher than heaven*;* as their glorious Head and Lord is said to be;† "to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," to signify the vicinity wherein God will have his people be to him, as

* Ἀνώτεροι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, Chrys. in loc. † Heb. vii. 26.

Jerusalem was to Sion, their houses and dwellings being near to his own, the city to the temple. And this passage may also look back upon their former state; whereas they had heretofore nothing but wilderness, they had now a city.* To which that also agrees, Heb. x. 16. Their earlier progenitors were wanderers and strangers even in Canaan itself, but now God had prepared for them a city in the heavenly Canaan, as before he did in the earthly. But lest their minds should stay in the external sign, he lets them know he means the heavenly Jerusalem, *i.e.* the Christian church, which was the kingdom of heaven begun; and heaven itself, as being that kingdom in its final and consummate state. "To an innumerable company of angels," *μυριάσιν*, which, though in the singular it signifies a definite number, being here put plurally, may well be understood to signify indefinitely a numberless multitude: or whereas some selected squadrons might only attend the solemnity of giving the law at Mount Sinai, here is the whole heavenly host, whose stated office it is to guard the church below, and worship the Majesty of heaven above. "To the general assembly," the *πανήγυρις*, the glorious *consessus* of all orders of blessed spirits; which as it may be supposed constant at all times, so is as supposable to be more frequented and solemn at some; and whither any may resort, as quick as the glance of an eye or a thought; and perhaps do at appointed seasons, so as to make more solemn appearances before the throne of God, as the laws and usages of that blessed world shall require. And we may well understand here an allusion to the appointed time at which there was a resort from all parts of Judea to Jerusalem; and as in the Christian church are, at set seasons, more numerous and solemn assemblies. Here may also be an allusion to the *Panathenaïca*, the more general conventions of all the people of Athens, upon some solemn occasions, which were wont to be called *πανήγυρις*. These can be referred to but as faint resemblances and shadows (whether they were the Jewish, or the Grecian assemblies) of this universal convention, that fills the vast expanse of heaven; in comparison whereof not only this little earth of ours, but the whole *vortex* to which it belongs, can be considered but as a very minute spot or point. The inhabitants that people those immense, pure, and bright regions, in their grand, stated, solemn assembly, make the term to which holy souls, ascending from among us, are continually coming. And here with what ineffable pleasure must these pure celestial intelligences, all filled with light, wisdom, life, benignity, love, and joy, converse with one another; behold, reverence, love, worship, and enjoy their sovereign Lord, displaying his glory perpetually before them, and making his rich immense goodness

* *Ἐκεῖ ἔρημος, ἐνταῦθα πόλις*, Id. ibid.

diffuse itself, and flow in rivers of pleasure most copiously among them!

"The church of the first-born written in heaven." These all constitute but one church, of whatsoever orders those blessed spirits are. And they are all said to be first-born, the church here meant consisting only of such in whom the divine life, or the holy, living image of God, hath place; they having all the privileges which did belong to the first-born, the inheritance, the principality, and the priesthood: for all God's sons are also heirs. Rom. viii. 17. And they are all made kings, and priests, (Rev. i. 6,) having all their crowns, which they often cast down before the supreme King; and their employment being perpetual oblation of praise, adoration, and all possible acknowledgments to him. They are all of excellent dignity, and every one enrolled, so that none have a place there by oversight, casualty, or intrusion. We must here understand an allusion to what citizens need not be told, the known custom of registering such as were *civitate donati*, or "made free."

"And to God the Judge of all." This may have reference to that office of the judge in the Olympic concertations, to whom it belonged to determine who were victors, and to whom the garlands or crowns were justly due. Here the privilege is, that they whose cause is to be tried, are sure of righteous judgment, and that they may approach the enthroned Majesty of heaven itself. None of them are denied liberty of access to the throne of glory above, as in the Christian church none are to the throne of grace below.

"And to the spirits of just men made perfect." This shows they all make but one church, even such spirits as have dwelt in flesh, being received into the communion of those whose dwelling never was with flesh. And, in the mean time, those that yet continue in these low, earthly stations, as soon as the principles of the divine life have place in them, belong, and are related to that glorious community; for they are said to be already come thereto, and all together compose but one family. For there is but one *paterfamilias*, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is said to be named. Ephes. iii. 15. Now for the encouragement of Christians unto a faithful perseverance, through all the difficulties of this their present conflicting, imperfect state, is this glorious representation made of the blessed issue their labours and sufferings shall have at last; whither they shall be gathered at the finishing of their course. And how Godlike, how worthy of himself the end shall be, into which he will run up all things, when the state of probation and preparation is over with his intelligent creatures, and the stable, permanent, eternal state comes to take place; which, because it is final, can admit no more changes, and because it is perfect, can no more

need any! Hither Christians are to come, and in some sense the sincere are said to be come already. And now upon this part of the term of their access, *viz.* that they are come to "the spirits of just men made perfect," we are to stay awhile; and shall consider,—

I. The perfection the spirits of the just do finally arrive to, in their future state.

II. In what sense sincere Christians, in their present state, can be said to be come to them who are so made perfect.

I. For the former of these, we may easily admit this being made perfect to be an agonistical phrase, as some of great note and worth have expounded it; and unto which that in the beginning of this chapter, of "running the race set before us," (the way laid out between the lines on each hand) doth plainly lead us. But it should hereupon be remote from us to think, that a mere relative dignity, or any external honours, are the things we must principally understand to be conferred, or which these *adepti* must be now thought to have obtained. It is a real, inward, subjective perfection, by which they all become most excellent creatures, that must be chiefly meant. Perfection, taken in the moral sense, doth, in the language of the holy Scriptures, contain a threefold gradation.

1. At the lowest, *sincerity;* as when our Saviour proposes to that querist, (Matt. xix. 21,) if he would be perfect, to "sell all he had, and give to the poor," following him, with the expectation of no other recompence but of a treasure in heaven. If a man's soul be not in a disposition to comport with such terms, upon a sufficient signification of our Lord's pleasure that he shall now do so; or if at any time this be the case, that he must either forego all this world, and even life itself, or else renounce Christ and Christianity; he is not yet in a right posture towards his last end. He hath not taken the Lord for his God, and best good; his heart more strongly adheres to this present world. But if he have arrived hither, which is his first step, resolving upon his true and right end, which he will supremely pursue against whatsoever competition of less valuable things; he is now, in the lowest sense, perfect, *i. e.* a resolved, thorough Christian.

2. An *eminent improvement,* greater maturity in divine knowledge, and all other Christian virtues. As when the apostle, blaming the slower progress of the Christian Hebrews, (*ch.* v. 13, 14,) that they were yet so unskilful in the word of righteousness, and only capable of milk, not the strong meat fit for persons come to a more grown age, nor had their senses as yet well exercised, &c. he exhorts them, (*ch.* vi. 1,) "leaving the first principles of the Christian doctrine, to go on to perfection."

3. The third is the *consummate* state of a Christian: so is a perfect man expounded by being come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that state, to which all gifts given by our ascended, conquering, crowned Redeemer, the whole gospel, the apostolate, the entire ministry, the whole frame and constitution of the Christian church, all evangelical truths and institutions, with whatsoever illuminations and influences we can suppose superadded to all these, have ultimate and final reference. And the state to which all shall come, (Eph. iv. 8—13,) is this most perfect state, in respect whereof the apostle says of himself, "that he had not yet attained, nor was already perfect." Phil. iii. 12. I do not reckon the mere natural perfection, either of the inner or outer man, to be here necessarily excluded; but that the moral is chiefly intended, and of that the ultimate consummative degrees, still reserving room for such additions as will follow the final judgment.

And I doubt it is not enough considered, how much the felicity of the future state depends upon such perfection of the subject of it. Concerning the object of felicity, we are agreed it can be no other than the blessed God himself, the all-comprehending good, fully adequate to the highest and most enlarged reasonable desires. But the contemperation of our faculties to the holy, blissful object, is so necessary to our satisfying fruition, that without that we are no more capable thereof, than a brute of the festivities of a quaint oration, or a stone of the relishes of the most pleasant meats and drinks. That meetness, which the apostle speaks of, (Col. i. 12,) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, is of no small importance to our participation itself.

We are too apt to fill our minds with ideas of a heaven made up of external, outside glories, forgetting we must have the kingdom of God within us, hereafter, in its perfect, as well as here, in its initial state; a kingdom that consists in righteousness,—first, universal, holy rectitude of all our powers; then, consequently, in peace and joy. The perfect cure of all the distempers of our spirits, and a confirmed, most perfectly happy temper, is of most absolute necessity to the blessedness of the heavenly state; and without it, any imagined external glory will signify no more to our satisfaction than rich and gorgeous apparel can give the desired content and ease to an ulcerous, diseased body; or (as the Plutar. moralist speaks) a diadem to an aching head, a gay slipper to a pained foot, or a gold ring to a sore finger.

Let a soul be supposed actually adjoined to that glorious assembly and church above, that is yet unacquainted with God, strange, and disaffected to him, alienated from the divine life, still carnally-minded, loving most, and looking back with a linger-

ing eye towards, this present world and state of things, full of pride, haughtiness, and self-magnifying thoughts, of envy, wrath, hatred, contentiousness, of deceit, guilefulness, and dissimulation, filled with ravenous lusts, and inordinate, insatiable desires after impossible things; such a soul will only seem to have mistaken its way, place, state, and company, and can only be a fit associate for devils and infernal spirits. Its condition would be equally uneasy to itself, and all about it; the outrage of its own lusts and passions would create to it a hell in the midst of heaven, and be to it as a thousand devils, both for wickedness and for torment.

But to give you a summary of this internal perfection of the spirits of just men, in their most perfect state, I cannot give you a fuller and more comprehensive one than is expressed in those few words, (1 John iii. 3,) "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Where are two things conjoined, that together express the perfect state of these blessed spirits; *likeness to God*, and *the vision of him.*

And these two are so connected, as to admit of a twofold reference to each other; either that this likeness to God be considered as preparative for the vision of him, and so that the latter words be considered as an argument of the former, *viz.* that because it is designed we shall live in the perpetual vision of God, it is therefore necessary we should be like him, without which we can be no way capable of such a sight, or of beholding so bright a glory. Or else, that the vision of God be perpetually productive of this likeness to him; and so that the latter words be understood not only to contain an argument, whence we may conclude this likeness must be, but also to express the immediate cause by which it is. As the form of expression will admit either of these references, so I doubt not the nature of the thing will require that we take them in both. There could be no such vision of God as is here meant, if there were not some previous likeness to him, in our former state. And when, in our final state, we are first admitted to that beatific, glorious vision, by that means, we may reasonably understand, will ensue the perfection of that likeness. Whereof also it is to be considered, that vision, (which spoken of the mind is knowledge) must not only be taken for a cause, but a part; for the image of God is at first renewed, (and with equal reason must be supposed at last perfected) in knowledge. Col. iii. 10.

This image or likeness of God, therefore, if we consider the natural order of working upon an intelligent subject, must as to that part of it which hath its seat in the mind or understanding faculty, be caused by the immediate irradiation of the divine light and glory upon that, and be the cause of the rest. But both together are the inherent subjective perfection of these

blessed spirits of the just, and comprehend all that belongs to this their moral perfection; the latter being itself also virtually comprehended in the former.

The vision of God, therefore, or their perfect knowledge of him, with whom they must ever have most of all to do, as the principal object of their fruition and enjoyment, must be the primary and the leading thing in this their perfection; for no doubt it is that perfection which directly concerns their ultimate satisfaction and blessedness, which is here intended; with which their eternal employment is most conjunct and complicated, as we shall after see. They enjoy and adore the same blessed object at once, and in doing the one, do the other. And besides the knowledge of him, there must be, by his beams, and in his light, (Ps. xxxvi. 9,) the perfect knowledge of all that it is needful or requisite they should know; without which, since all their enjoyments in the heavenly state must be in their first rise intellectual, it would be impossible they should ever perfectly enjoy any thing at all. And that this perfection of just men's spirits is intended to be summarily comprehended in the perfection of their knowledge, is more than intimated by that series of discourse which we find 1 Cor. xiii. 9—12. The apostle, comparing the imperfection of our present, with the perfection of our future state, sums up all in this, "that we know now but in part, and that then we shall know as we are known." But the perfection of this knowledge he seems more to state in the manner of knowing, than in the extent and compass of the things known. That in this latter respect it may admit of increase, they cannot doubt who consider the finite capacity of a created mind, and the mighty advantages we shall have for continual improvement, both from the clear discovery of things in that bright and glorious light, and from the receptiveness of our enlarged and most apprehensive minds. But that state can admit of no culpable ignorance, nor of any that shall more infer infelicity, than include sin.

Therefore now to speak more distinctly, we take this perfection of the spirits of the just to be principally meant of their moral perfection, such as excludes all sin, and all misery; as morality comprehends and connects together; *sanctity*, the goodness of the means; and *felicity*, the goodness of the end: the former most directly, but most certainly inferring the latter. If, therefore, we say this is their sinless perfection, we say all that the case requires. In that it is said to be the perfection of spirits, it must indeed suppose all that natural perfection which belongs to such a sort of creatures, as such, in their own kind. But inasmuch as the specification is added, "of the just," it is their moral perfection, or most perfectly holy rectitude, from which their blessedness is inseparable, that seems ultimately intended. But

now, whereas this their ultimate perfection hath been said to be virtually contained and summed up in knowledge, we are hereupon to consider how this may appear to be a complete summary of all such perfection. And nothing can more evidently appear, if you join together, the true matter or object, and right manner or nature of this knowledge.

(1.) The true and proper object of it must be, not *omne scibile*, but whatsoever they can be obliged or concerned to know, or that is requisite to their duty and felicity; all that lies within their compass, as they are creatures, that in such a distinct sphere, or in their own proper order, are to correspond to the ends of their creation, *i. e.* to glorify the Author of their beings, and be happy in him. Infinite knowledge belongs not to them, is not competent to their nature, nor necessary either to their employment, or to their blessedness in the heavenly state. Whatsoever knowledge is requisite to these ends, will be included in this their final perfection.

It is, by the way, to be observed, how this matter is expressed, *made perfect*, which signifies our arriving to this perfection out of an imperfect state. We were created with an original perfection, sufficient to a state of probation. By our apostacy we became sinfully imperfect; "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. iii. 23. We have been put upon a new trial by our Redeemer. Their perfection, who have run out their course, is, by the grace of God, and by his methods, restored, and improved to its just pitch. They are now, their trial being over, set in a consummate rectitude towards the ends of their creation; and herein are endowed with all the knowledge they need, *viz.* of such things as, in reference to those ends, they can any way be concerned with.

With the blessed God himself they are most of all concerned, for him they are eternally to adore and enjoy. Therefore, that their perfection should be virtually included in divine knowledge, is congruous to the state of their case, and to the language of the holy Scriptures; which expresses their most perfect state by the vision of God, in the mentioned 1 John iii. 2, and Matt. v. 8, Heb. xii. 14, &c. which phrase is not borrowed from the sight of the eye, and transferred to that of the mind, at random, or without (most probable) design. It most aptly signifies the great facility of this knowledge, that it is not toilsome, there is little labour in it, it is not such as requires great pains; it is but intuition, not a cautious, wary ratiocination, wherein we use to be very solicitous lest we draw any irregular or untrue consequences. We do very easily, and on the sudden, without suspicion, or fear of error, only behold what is offered to our view. This is a great perfection of mind with these blessed spirits, to be capable of knowing the greatest things so easily, and so soon;

to know by seeing. And their aptness hereto is a moral perfection, for the clearness of the discovery infers their greater obligation to attend, and not to divert from what shall cost them so little. The blessed God's manifestation of himself, in that brightest and most glorious light, is not only evidently supposed, for in his light only can we see light, (Ps. xxxvi. 9,) but it is emphatically expressed in the before-mentioned text, (1 Cor. xiii. 12,) of seeing face to face; which signifies, on his part, gracious vouchsafement, his offering his blessed face to view, that he hides it not, nor turns it away, as here sometimes he doth, in just displeasure. And his face means even his most conspicuous glory, such as, in this state of mortality, it would be mortal to us to behold; for no man, not so divine a man as Moses himself, could see his face and live. And it signifies, on their part who are thus made perfect, their applying and turning their face towards his, *viz.* that they see not casually, or by fortuitous glances, but eye to eye, by direct and most voluntary intuition; which, therefore, on their part, implies moral perfection; the will, directing and commanding the eye, and upon unexpressible relishes of joy and pleasure forbidding its diversion, holds it steady and intent. Here our ignorance of God is culpable, being voluntary, not liking to retain him in our knowledge. Rom. i. 28. There our knowledge is inculpable and sinless, being chosen, purposed, and always principally, for its most proper ends, the perfect adoration and fruition of the blessed object we so fixedly behold, and so earnestly covet to know.

It is also fit to be noted, that the very fruition of the blessed God itself, which the holy Scripture includes in our vision of him, is not only our very blessedness itself, but it is our duty too. It is a thing enjoined us, and comprehended in that first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and might, and mind;" which who can perfectly do, without a complacential acquiescence, and final rest of their will in him, as the best, the most perfect, and all-comprehending good? And hereupon, though we are wont to distinguish our glorifying God, and enjoying him; they are most manifestly coincident, and but notionally distinct. For in this our fruitive acquiescence of will in him stands our highest veneration, our most practical, most significant acknowledgment and testimony concerning him, as the highest, the most complete, and most absolutely perfect good; in that we seek no further, but take up our final rest in him. This is to give him the proper glory of his Godhead, to glorify him as God. And therefore, this being the fullest sense of that great and summary command, it is only a commanding us to be happy. As, on the other hand, the misery of the intelligent creature is his greatest, and most injurious, iniquity, an aversion of will from the blessed God, a

testimony against him, as none of the best good, and the greatest indignity which created nature can put upon him who is goodness itself. Thus, then, is the knowledge or vision of God, even as it is fruitive, a moral perfection. But the divine knowledge, more at large, of these holy spirits, though it be principally conversant about God as its noblest object, excludes not their applying their minds to other objects too, according to their concernment with them. And yet,—

(2.) How aptly this perfection is included in such knowledge, will further appear, if you consider the manner of knowing, or the special nature and kind of this vision or knowledge, *viz.* that it is not that slight, ineffectual, merely notional, insipid knowledge, which unregenerate minds are now wont to have of the most evident truths; *viz.* that, for instance, that God is the most excellent, the most perfect, the most desirable, as well as the most adorable good; which knowledge, because it answers not the true end of divine knowledge, is called ignorance: whereupon they are said to be "alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them." Eph. iv. 18. But that ignorance is paraphrased by blindness of heart, *i. e.* a most perfectly voluntary and chosen ignorance, founded in aversion of will. And elsewhere, (Jer. ix. 3, 6,) by a refusing to know God, a saying to him, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Job xxi. 14. Whereupon the light that is in such is said to be very darkness, and then how great is that darkness! Matt. vi. 23.

This knowledge or vision, now in perfection, is most deeply and inwardly penetrative, efficacious, and transforming, admits a light which spreads and transfuses itself through the whole soul. So it is, at first, in every truly regenerate spirit; whereby such a one is begotten into the divine likeness, his image is impressed upon it, which, as hath been noted, is said to be renewed in knowledge. Col. iii. 10. So that, as by solemn message to the sons of men, God is declared to be pure light, (1 John i. 5,) "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all:" and as he is the original, the paternal light, the Father of lights, (James i. 17,) so they that are born of him are said to be light itself, and the children of light; "Ye were darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light," (Eph. v. 8,) and they are therefore said, as the sons of God, to shine as lights, (Phil. ii. 15,) or required to do so; for the words bear either form: this so energetical, efficacious light, is, in the mentioned texts, manifestly intended to connote holiness; as it doth also, Rom. xiii. 12, which the antithesis there shows; "works of darkness" and "armour of light:" and in many other places.

Accordingly the whole, even of practical religion and godli-

ness, is in the holy Scriptures expressed by the knowledge of God. 2 Chron. xxx. 22. It is signified to be in its own nature sanctifying, and inconsistent with prevailing sin, (1 Cor. xv. 34,) in which they that live are therefore said to be destitute of it; who are also upon the same account said not to have had any sight of God. (3 John *v.* 11.) "He that sinneth (the word is ὁ κακοποιῶν, a doer or worker of sin) hath not seen God." The light which this vision of God receives, must much more, in the perfected spirits of the just, be supposed so prevalent and victorious, as quite to have chased away and expelled all remainders of this impure darkness. Every such spirit is therefore become as it were an orb of purest, most operative, and lively light; an intellectual, and a self-actuating sun, full of fervour and motive power, besides mere light. Whereupon, whatsoever this light and knowledge discovers it is fit for such a soul to be, it is; and fit for it to do, it can never fail to do it.

Therefore the making of such spirits perfect must be understood, in greatest part, to consist in restoring the order of their faculties towards each other; which was broken by the apostacy to that degree, and they so debilitated and become so languid, so impotent and enfeebled, that neither could the one faculty lead, nor the other follow. Whence light, even about the most practical, and the most important matters imaginable, true notions, right sentiments, signified no more to command, to govern, to form and direct the inclinations and motions of the soul; than if, as to all its sentiments about these matters, you did put false instead of true, wrong instead of right, most absurd, most impossible, instead of most congruous, most necessary. Take, for instance, the idea of God, let it be supposed to comprehend, (as every one grants it doth, whether he acknowledge his existence or no) all conceivable, all possible excellencies; that it means an infinite, eternal, ever-living, self-subsisting being, most perfectly intelligent, wise, true, holy, righteous, powerful, and blessed; the original of life, being, and blessedness to the creation, according to the several kinds, natures, and capacities of his creatures; the supreme and sovereign Lord of all, to whom it belongs to govern and dispose of what he hath made; of most immense and abounding goodness and benignity, most bountiful to the indigent, compassionate to the miserable, reconcilable to the guilty, propitious to the penitent, most complacentially kind, with highest delight, to the holy and the good, severe only to the obstinately impenitent and implacable, that will by no means or methods be reclaimed.

Take we, again, from hence, the measures by which we are to judge what ought to be the dispositions and deportments of his reasonable creatures towards him; that they be entirely composed and made up of love, reverence, humility, dependence,

devotedness, subjection, gratitude, and adoration. And suppose we that, in the theory, this be, as it generally is, admitted and acknowledged as the just and most regular consequence of the former. And let us again suppose, that we being made after his image, which in the natural part remains, and is still common to mankind; and as to the moral part, is restored in all that are regenerate and born of God: and that therefore we ought to love universally all mankind, to wish and do well to them, as to ourselves; and no more to injure any man, than we would destroy, pull in pieces, or offer violence to our own life and being: and that we ought, with a more peculiar delectation, to embrace and love all holy and good men, without other distinction, than as any appear more to excel in goodness.

Our light about these things is so clear, they are so little disputable, and so difficult it is to form any argument to the contrary, that few ever set themselves, by any explicit or formed thoughts, to oppose or contend against them. It is not (at least not generally) so much as attempted to disprove them, or assert contrary principles in opposition to them. Therefore that the dispositions and common practice of men do so little agree with these principles, is not that their notions are herein doubtful, but spiritless; their light is not uncertain, but weak and impotent. And hereupon their knowledge signifies as little to its proper end, as if their apprehensions touching these things were none at all, or quite contrary to what they are.

They as much neglect and slight the blessed God, or decline to be concerned with him, as if they denied all the things of him which his idea contains; or as if they affirmed all the things of him, which it most directly excludes. They shun, they fly from him, as if they thought him the worst of beings, while they acknowledge him the best and most excellent good; disobey and affront him, as if they thought he had no right to rule them, while they confess him the sovereign Lord of all the world; and steer their course both towards him, and one another, in as direct repugnancy to his rules, as if they thought them all transversed; and that the most opposite system of laws and precepts were given them, by some undoubted authority, to regulate all their practice.

It would amaze a thinking man that all this should be so; that intelligent creatures, that the reasonable, living, immortal spirits of men should be sunk to so low a pitch of degeneracy and vileness! But much more, that it being so apparently thus, it should be so seldom reflected on! that men are not afraid of themselves! that they appear not as so many frightful monsters, each in their own eyes! That they consider not, what are these faculties for; Why have I such notions of truth in my mind? Why have I a will whereby to choose, resolve,

act, and be accordingly? What a distorted, misshapen creature is this soul of mine; every thing in me running counter to right and fit! Whatever hath thus fatally perverted all their powers, hath stupified them too; so as not only not to find fault, but to applaud and be well pleased with themselves for all this.

But now shall we not take our advantage from hence, to conceive and be enamoured of the rectitude, the amiableness of this most excellent state of the perfected spirits of the just? Now doth comely order succeed, instead of the most horrid deformity; distorted limbs are set right, the ligaments and connection of the disjointed faculties to each other are restored; and whatsoever the enlightened mind suggests as fit and due presently obtains. No complaint remains of seeing what is better, and doing what is worse; or that when good should be done, evil is present. There is nothing but perfect regularity, harmony, and agreement. All things move smoothly, and with constant equability and decorum. Right dictates of the leading faculty, and ready compliance of such as are to follow, make with them a perpetual, even, and uninterrupted course.

Likeness to God, therefore, in every other just respect, certainly ensues upon such preceding knowledge of him; for the kind and nature of that knowledge being, as it ought to be, powerful, vigorous, transforming of the whole soul, and the will ductile and compliant; agreeable impressions do most certainly take place. As now, "beholding——— we are changed," (2 Cor. iii. 18,) much more in that state where the injected divine beams are so strong and vivid, and the receptive disposition so prompt, free, apt and facile. Therefore to be made like God, is to be made perfect, according to the ultimate intendment of these words. The vision, or knowledge of God, in the heavenly state, being never intended for idle, ineffectual speculation; as this perfection is not otherwise to be understood, than with reference to the ends we were made for; that we may be immediately capable of, and apt for everlasting adoration and fruition of the blessed God, in a joint and most full consent and communion with the general assembly, the whole community of all the blessed spirits besides, whose eternal work and delight this will be.

This likeness to God must yet be understood with exception to the divine peculiarities, as hath been elsewhere shown,* (whither we now refer, only to save the labour of transcribing.) In respect of which peculiarities also there must be, on our part, a correspondency, *i.e.* a likeness with allowance for necessary disagreement; as between a seal and the impression, where what is convex in the one, is hollow in the other; and yet otherwise like, *i. e.* correspondent to each other too. So the case is

* Blessedness of the Righteous.

between the blessed God's all-sufficient fulness, and our receptive emptiness; between his supremacy, and our subjection. In respect to other things, common to him and us, with the rest of those happy spirits that inhabit the regions of light and bliss, spirituality itself, life and vigour, knowledge, wisdom, holiness, love, serenity, benignity, mercy, peace, and joy, there is a nearer resemblance; these things passing under the same name with him and with us, but with the infinite inequality still, of God and creature.

Now let us here give ourselves leave to pause awhile, and contemplate those innumerable multitudes of pure and happy creatures, perfected, or ever perfect spirits, that inhabit and replenish those ample, spacious regions above, the vast, and (to us, or to any thought of ours) immense and endless tracts of light and glory. Consider them every one composed, and made up of lively light, and love, as we are told, "God is light," (1 John i. 5;) and "God is love." *ch.* iv. 16. Consider them all as most intelligent, and knowing creatures, even of the most profound and hidden mysteries, that here were wont to perplex and puzzle the most inquisitive mind; ignorant of nothing, or apt to comprehend any thing, needful and pleasant to be known, or lawful to be inquired into; curious to know nothing useless, or unlawful; most perfectly wise creatures, prudent sages, endowed with a self-governing wisdom, so as easily, without a vexatious solicitude and anxiety, but with a noble freedom, to order and command all their thoughts, appetitions, actions, and deportments towards God, themselves, and one another, so as never to be guilty of mistake or error, in any motion of mind or will; never to omit any thing in its season, or do any thing out of season. Consider them whether in solemn assembly, (which may be stated and perpetual, by successively appointed numbers, for aught we know) or diverting and retiring, or faring to and fro, as inclination with allowance, or command, may direct: yet all every where full of God, continually receiving the vital, satisfying, glorious communications of the every-where present, self-manifesting Deity; all full of reverence, and most dutiful love to the eternal Father of spirits, his eternal Son, and Spirit; all formed into perpetual, lowliest, and most grateful adoration, with highest delight and pleasure; all apprehensive of their depending state, and that they owe their all to that fulness which filleth all in all; every one in his own eyes a self-nothing, having no separate, divided interest, sentiment, will, or inclination; every one continually self-consistent, agreeing with himself, ever free of all self-displeasure, never finding any cause, or shadow of a cause, for any angry self-reflection upon any undue thought or wish in that their present, perfect state; though not unmindful what they were, or might have been, and ascribing their present state

and stability to the grace of God, and dedicating their all to the praise and glory of that most free and unaccountable grace; all well assured, and unsuspiciously conscious, with unexpressible satisfaction, of their acceptance with God, and placing, with the fullest sense and relish, their very life in his favour; all full of the most complacential benignity towards one another, counting each one's felicity his own, and every one's enjoyments being accordingly multiplied so many thousand-fold, as he apprehends every one as perfectly pleased and happy as himself.

Let but any one recount these things with himself, as he easily may, with far greater enlargement of thoughts, many more such things as these; and he needs not be at a loss for a notion of this perfect state of the spirits of the just. And for further confirmation, as well as for a somewhat more distinct and explicit conception hereof, let it be moreover considered what was the undertaking and design of our Redeemer, to whom the next words direct our eye; "And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling," &c. He was to be the restorer of these once lost, apostate spirits; and besides reconciling them to God by his blood, that speaks better things than that of Abel, was to impart his own Spirit to them; and by the tenor of that new testament, or covenant, whereof he was Mediator, was not only to procure that their sins and iniquities should be remembered no more; but that the divine laws should be put in their minds, and written in their hearts. *ch.* viii. 10, 12. They are, therefore, by the blood of the everlasting covenant to be made perfect, (*ch.* xiii. 20, 21,) in every good work to do his will, having all that wrought in them which is well pleasing in his sight, through Christ Jesus. Now when shall he be said to have accomplished his design? Not till every one be presented perfect (Col. i. 28,) and faultless, in the presence of the divine glory. Jude 24. Do but consider what was a design worthy of so great an undertaker, the Son of God; and of his being engaged so deeply, of his being so earnestly intent upon it, as to become first a man, then a sacrifice to effect it.

Consider his death and resurrection, wherein he will have all that belong to him to have a *consortium*, a participation with him, and conformity to him; as is largely discoursed, (Phil. iii.) and hence we are to make our estimate what is "the mark and prize of the high calling of God in Christ." *v.* 12, 14. This can be no other than final consummate Christianity, the Christian's high calling *in termino;* and which they that are inchoatively perfect or sincere, must be so minded as to design it for themselves. *v.* 15. Therefore, let me but tell any man, so that he can understand me, what true Christianity now is, and

he can tell me what heaven is. Let me tell him what it is to be a sincere Christian, in this present state; and he can tell me what it is to be perfect, in the heavenly state. The writing God's law in the heart, truly and perfectly, goes far towards both.

The two great commandments impressed, that are both fulfilled in love, are of vast compass to this purpose, and with the certain *connexa*, comprehend all:—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart," &c. And—"thy neighbour as thyself," &c. What a heaven upon earth would these two create, reduced to practice! And when the impression is perfect, what needs there more? But God knows, men too commonly measure their heaven by their Christianity, on the wrong hand; a Christianity, and a heaven, both external and foreign to them. God deliver me from this so palpable and destructive a delusion, of a Christianity and a heaven foreign to my soul! A religion, and a felicity that touch not our minds, that never impress our inner man; what can we be the better for them? What! to be imposed upon by so absurd a mis-conceit, and so repugnant to Scripture, which so expressly tells us, that glory we are finally to expect is a glory whereby we are to be glorified, made glorious, and to be revealed in us, and wherein we are to partake with Christ. Rom. viii. 17, 18. Or did the Son of God put on man, and suffer so deeply for us, with a design upon us less than this? But now my work is done (nor do my limits allow me to enlarge) in reference to the—

II. Head of discourse proposed:—In what sense sincere Christians may be said to be already come to the spirits of the just made perfect. Enough may be collected from what hath been said. It is to be understood,—

1. In a relative sense; they are come, they already belong, to that general assembly, that church which the myriads of angels and the perfected spirits of the just are of. A local coming none can pretend in this case to dream of; they are said "to *be come* to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Such were truly said to be come into the very constitution of the Roman policy, that were *civitate donati*, admitted freemen, though they lived a thousand miles off.

2. In a real sense, by a gradual, but true participation of the *primordia*, "the first" and most constituent principles and perfections of the heavenly state.

And now, if that were the thing designed, there is a most adequate ground-work laid for a true and the most ample encomium of that rare person, our never too deeply lamented, nor too highly renowned Queen, whose funerals drew my thoughts to this theme. View the perfection of the spirits of the just, as they were growing, and more eminently grown towards their

highest pitch; and here is our ground. Do not wonder it is laid as high as heaven, for thence they begin, as well as end there. By most benign influences from thence, though the plant was set on earth, they had an early bud, in concealment; but we have seen them blossom in open view, still aspiring thitherward, as there they are fully blown. Her otherwise royal parentage, was thus incomparably more royal. The lustre of her excellent virtues had all the advantage which they could have by dwelling well; as the endowments (what they were) of a great prince heretofore, were noted to have had the contrary disadvantage. It was common sense, not the poet's authority, that could make the apprehension take place; that virtue is more grateful, exerted from a comely body. So illustrious an instance would give more countenance than the most argumentative philosophy, to the opinion, that souls have a great, subordinate agency in forming their own mansions; which the more one apprehends, the less credulous he would be of their original equality. It must be a very peculiar genius, that could stamp so inimitable and undeceiving signatures, as appeared in her majesty's most graceful countenance, in her comely mien and looks, and all her deportments. Whosoever should behold the fabric she inhabited, made up of pulchritude and state, must conclude some very lovely and venerable inhabitant dwelt there. But nearer approaches discovered such excellencies of the indwelling mind, that quickness of apprehension, that clearness and strength of reason, that solidity of judgment, that complexionate goodness, εὔφυια which that noble philosopher speaks of as the seed-plot of virtues that must soon beget, not conviction only, but admiration.

Such were the bounties of nature in the forming a rare and excellent person; but how munificent were the largesses of grace! That reverence of the divine Majesty that appeared in her whole course; a life transacted under the government of religion; her constant care to avoid what she thought sinful, and readiness to do what she judged might be serviceable to the interest of God; her detestation of the profligate wickedness, that she knew to be dishonourable and offensive to him, and of all the principles that any way tended thereto: her continued conversation with God, in the constant practice of religious duties, and in all the exercises of godliness that belonged to her (most beloved and frequented) closet, the family, or more solemn assembly; her most composed seriousness in attendance upon the worship of God, in the way which she chose, (and which that she chose no one could think strange;) the natural and most unaffected appearances hereof, the remotest from ostentation, but which could not quite be hid, nor ought, when in religious assemblies we are to testify we all worship the same

God, and that all our applications and addresses have one centre above, and are all to be directed to one and the same glorious object (unless one would have the religion of the church be allowed the retiredness of a closet, or reduce joint social worship, wherein all are, some way or other, to express their unanimity and consent, unto that which is merely solitary and single:)—her assiduity in her religious course, the seasons, order, and constancy whereof seemed to be governed by the ordinances of Heaven, that ascertain the succession of day and night, so that what was said so long ago of that famed person's justice (and which equally may of hers) might have a nobler application to her religion; that one might as soon divert the course of the sun, as turn her from her daily course in religious duties:—this argued a steady principle, and of the highest excellency, that of divine love. Any other would have its more frequent qualms and inequalities. The remark was wise and weighty, concerning the insincere man, (Job xxvii. 10,) "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?" That course is never like to be even, uniform, and continued, that springs not from love; or is not sweetened by delight and pleasure. All these are to us great indications of a copious communication of divine grace, and that she received not the grace of God in vain. I cannot here omit her reverential regard for the Lord's day, which at the Hague I had a very particular occasion to take notice of. On a Saturday, a vessel (the packet boat) was stranded not far from thence, which lying very near the shore, I viewed (happening to be thereabouts at that time) till the last passengers were brought (as all were) safe off. Multitudes went to see it, and her highness being informed of it, said she was willing to see it too, but thought she should not, for it was then too late for that evening, and she reckoned by Monday it would be shivered to pieces; (though it remaining entire till then, she was pleased to view it that day) but she resolved, she added, she would not give so ill an example as to go see it on the Lord's day.

Next to her exemplary piety towards God, shone with a second lustre her most amiable benignity towards men; and peculiarly towards them whom she judged pious, of whatsoever persuasions in respect of the circumstances of religion. She opened not her mouth, but with wisdom, and in her tongue was the law of kindness. She hath divers times expressed her acceptance, value, and desire of their prayers, whom she knew in some modes of worship to differ from her; as one that well understood that the kingdom of God stands not in lesser things, but in righteousness, peace, &c. and that they who in these things serve Christ, are acceptable to God, and are to be approved of men. She was not inaccessible to such of her

subjects, whose dissentient judgments, in some such things, put them into lower circumstances. Great she was in all valuable excellencies, nor greater in any than in her most condescending goodness. Her singular humility adorned all the rest. Speaking once of a good thing which she intended, she added; "But of myself I can do nothing;" and somewhat being by one (of two more only) then present, interposed, she answered, she hoped God would help her. She is, as the text speaks, gone to Mount Sion, in the highest sense of that phrase. And to sum up all, he that will read the character, (Ps. xv. and xxiv.) of an inhabitant of that holy hill, will there read her true and most just character. Wherein I cannot omit to take notice, how sacred she reckoned her word. I know with whom she hath sometimes conferred, whether having given a promise of such a seeming import, she could consistently therewith do so or so; saying, that whatever prejudice it were to her, she would never depart from her word.

These rich endowments every way accomplished her for all the duties that belonged to her, whether in her Christian, conjugal, or political capacity. Which if we consider together, the world cannot give an instance, for many by-past ages, of so much lost out of it, in one person. When did Christianity lose so conspicuous an ornament?—a king, so delectable and helpful a consort?—a kingdom, so venerable and beloved a sovereign? For our king how are we concerned to pray, "Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions!" And we are to hope he hath some such sincere purposes and vows deeply infixed in his heart, as those subjoined in that Psalm cxxxii. which will engage the divine presence with him, by which, neither shall his pressures be intolerable, nor his difficulties insuperable; but his "bow shall abide in strength, and the arms of his hands be made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." Gen. xlix. 24. But England, England! how deplorable is thy case! In what agonies should every concerned heart be for thee, O England! In the latter days (and God grant they be not too late) thou mayest consider, that after many former, defeated methods, thou hadst a prince (yea, princess) studiously intent upon making thee a reformed, happy people. Is there now no cause to fear, lest it be determined; "Let him that is filthy, be filthy still; and him that is unjust, be unjust still?"

Few can be ignorant of the endeavours of our most gracious Queen to that purpose. And I am persuaded nothing did more recommend our deceased, excellent archbishop to her Majesty, than that she knew his heart to be as hers, in that design, *viz.* of a general reformation of manners, that must have concerned all parties; and without which (leading and preparing us thereto) union, and the cessation of parties, was little to have been hoped

for. And so far as I could understand, the attempt of it was as little intended; being otherwise not likely to meet with either a blessing from God, or any sufficient disposition to it with men. Great dispositions must, with much gratitude to God, be acknowledged in those who hold that supreme, and this subordinate station. But such a work is not likely to succeed, till (by whatsoever mean) minds be brought to that temper, that it will even do itself. And that two such persons should be removed out of them, within not much more than a month's time, is an awful umbrage to us of a divine determination, that less gentle methods are fitter for us. And God's holy will be done!

It is now obvious to any considering person, that many very useful reflections might be made upon the text, and the occasion together. I shall shut up this present discourse with these that follow.

1. It ought to be most remote from us to confine, in our narrow thoughts, sincere religion and godliness to a party, distinguished by little things; and most extra-essential thereto. Take we that great apostle's document; "I perceive God is no respecter of persons;" and what he said of nations, may not we as aptly say that of all such parties—"They that fear God, and work righteousness, are accepted of him." Acts x.

Let us once learn to reckon substantial godliness a greater thing than the using, or not using, this or that ceremony; and account that faith, mercy, judgment, and the love of God, are not to be past over for as little things, as the tithing of mint, anise, and cummin. I believe there are few in the world, if they castt heir eyes about them, but might truly say, (what, I thank God, I have often thought) that of all our parties that hold the substantials of religion, I have known some of far greater value than myself. Let the being a good Christian, signify more with us, than to belong to a so—or so—shaped, or —figured church.

A noted writer among the ancients brings in one, saying, by way of exprobration to Christians: "There is Socrates, the prince of wisdom, if any among you be so great, let them imitate him, if they can." What persuasion among us can produce a greater example, than we have been now considering: or more worthy the imitation even of private Christians?

2. The spirits of the just on earth are in a great propinquity, and have a near alliance, to heaven. They are not there to have the first foundations laid of their blessed state, but are only to be made perfect. They have in them here the first principles, the elements of their final blessedness; heaven in little, as the acorn contains the tree, or the embryo the man.

3. The just in this world are of the church in heaven. They

are "come to the general assembly, the church of the first born," &c. All sincere Christians, whether in heaven or earth, (as hath been noted) make but one family. Ephes. iii. 15. Good God! can our little differences here, set us at greater distance than heaven and earth? The observation is worth considering of that wise and noble person:* "It will be found a matter of great moment and use, to define what, and of what latitude, those points are, which discorporate men from the body of the church—and if any think this hath been done, now long ago, let them seriously consider with what sincerity and moderation the same hath been performed," &c. And if it had not been done with due sincerity and moderation in his days, it is much to be doubted whether it have since. In the mean time it is to be considered, that what differenceth any thing, constitutes it; and if a church (of whatsoever denomination) be constituted in its superstructure (though its foundation be good) of hay and stubble, of things that can belong to no church, as a church, it must some time or other suffer loss; and though the builders be saved, it must be by a more penetrative than an imagined purgatory fire.

4. Angels must have kind propensions towards men, especially good men, in this world, knowing these are of the same society and church with them; though the divine wisdom hath not judged it suitable to our present state of probation, there should be an open and common intercourse between them and us. It is, however, a great incongruity we should have strange, uncouth, shy, frightful, or unfrequent thoughts of them, in the mean time.

5. When we find any excellent persons in our world attain far and high towards the perfection of the heavenly state, it ought to be a great encouragement to us, and is an obligation, to aspire to some like pitch. We see it is not an impossible or an unpracticable thing; and should disdain to crawl now as worms, when we are to soar as angels.

6. We ought, hereupon, to acknowledge and adore the munificence and power of divine grace, that it should design the making of such abjects as we, fit to be associated with an assembly, the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect; and will not fail to effect it, if we comply with the apt methods appointed for that blessed purpose.

7. When such ascend, and are taken up from us, that God had eminently prepared for translation, we should take great care lest we unduly regret it: that we do not envy heaven its own, to which they are more akin, than to our earth; and which had a greater right in them than we could pretend.

* Lord Viscount Verulam, Adv. of Learning, lib. 9.

8. We should look upon funeral solemnities for such, with more prospect than retrospect, and consider them as directing our eye less downward to our own forsaken world, than upwards to the celestial regions and inhabitants. To such, to die is to be born; they die only out of our mean world, and are born into a most glorious one. Their funerals should be celebrations of their ascent; and an exulting joy should therefore, in that case, not be quite banished from funeral sorrows, but be allowed to mingle therewith, as sunbeams glittering in a cloud. When the greatest person was leaving this world, that ever lived in it, he says, "If you loved me, you would rejoice that I say, I go to the Father." We should bear our part in the joys of heaven, upon this occasion, if we relate to it. And when we are told, there is joy there, among the angels of God, for the conversion of such who are thereby but prepared to come to their assembly; we may conclude there is much more for their glorification, when they are fully come, and joined to it. Funeral solemnities are very dull, melancholy shows, without such references forwards and upwards. With how different a temper of mind would two persons have been the spectators of Jacob's funeral, the one of whom should have looked no further than the Canaanites or Egyptians did, who would only say, "Some great person is dead;" but the other, by divine illumination, is enabled to apprehend, "This dust here mingles with the earth of this land, to presignify—this people, of whom he was the head, must possess it: yea, moreover, here the great God will fix his residence and throne; upon such a mount shall be the palace of the supreme King. Here, after great mutations, and revolutions, and great destruction both of the Egyptians, and Canaanites, shall this people have a long succession of princes and rulers, that shall be of themselves; and all this but as representing a king and kingdom that shall rule and spread over all the earth, and reach up at length into heaven. Canaan shall be a holy land. Unto Sion's king shall tributary princes bring their gifts out of Egypt, and Ethiopia stretch out her hands, and all nations serve him. His empire shall confine with the universe, and all power be given him both in heaven and earth." With what a large and raised mind would such a one have beheld this funeral! What better Canaan, than we now behold, we shall have in this world, God knows! And we should be the less solicitous to know intermediate things, when we are so fully ascertained of the glorious end of all things. And let us reflect upon the solemn pomp of that late mournful assembly, that lamented our Queen's departure out of our world, comparing it with the transcendent magnificence of that triumphant assembly into which she is received above.

THE GOOD MAN'S DESIRE OF BEING ABSENT FROM THE BODY, IN ORDER TO HIS BEING PRESENT WITH THE LORD.

A SERMON

ON

THE DEATH OF MRS. MARGARET BAXTER.

DEDICATION.

TO THE VERY REVEREND

MR. RICHARD BAXTER.

SIR,

WHEN you assigned unto me that part, not of forming a memorial for your excellent deceased consort (which is reserved to the fittest hand) but, of instructing the people upon the occasion of her decease; this text of Scripture occurring also to my thoughts, (which I reckoned might sufficiently agree with the design you generally recommended to me, though I am sensible how little the prosecution did so,) it put me upon considering with how great disadvantage we set ourselves, at any time, to reason against bodily inclination; the great antagonist we have to contend against, in all our ministerial labours! An attempt which, if a higher power set not in with us, looks like the opposing of our faint breath to the steady course of a mighty river!

I have often thought of Cicero's wonder: "That since we consist of a mind and a body, the skill of curing and preserving the body is so admired, as to have been thought a divine invention; that which refers to the mind is neither so desired, before it be found out, nor so cultivated afterwards, nor is approved and acceptable to so many: yea, is even to the most, suspected, and hateful!"

Even the tyrant Phalaris tells one, in an epistle, (though by way of menace) that whereas a good physician may cure a distempered body, death is the only physician for a distempered mind. It works not indeed a universal cure. But of such on whom it may, how few are there that count not the remedy worse than the disease! Yet how many thousands are there, that for greater bodily advantages afterwards, endure much more pain and trouble than there is in dying!

We are a mysterious sort of creatures ! Yet I acknowledge the wisdom of God is great and admirable, in planting in our natures so strong a love of this bodily life, without which the best would be more impatient of living on earth so long as God thinks it requisite they should ; and to the worst, death would not be a sufficiently formidable punishment ; and consequently, human laws and justice would be, in great part, eluded.

And the same divine wisdom is not less admirable, in providing there should so generally be so much of mutual love, as doth obtain among near friends and relatives ; for thereby their cohabitation and mutual offices towards each other are made pleasant and easy ; which is a great compensation for the concomitant evil, that by the same love their parting with one another cannot but be rendered grievous.

But for you, who live so much upon the borders, and in the pleasant view of the other state ; the one separation is, I doubt not, much easier to your sense, and the other to your forethoughts, than they are with the most. A perfect indifferency towards this present bodily state and life, is, in mine eyes, a most covetable thing, and my daily aim ; wherein I entreat your prayers may assist

Your most respectful, though most unworthy

Fellow servant, and expectant in the work

And hope of the gospel,

J. H.

A SERMON.

2 Cor. v. 8.

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

The solemn face of this assembly seems to tell me, that you already know the present, special occasion of it; and that I scarce need to tell any of you, that our worthy, honoured friend, Mrs. Baxter, is dead. You have (it is like, most of you) often met her in this place, when her pleased looks were wont to show what delight she took to have many share in those great advantages, wherein she had a more particular interest; you are now to meet her here no more, but are met yourselves to lament together that our world hath lost so desirable an inhabitant; and to learn, (as I hope you design) what so instructive an occasion shall (of itself, or as it may be improved) serve to teach us.

It doth of itself most obviously teach the common document, that we, who are of the same make and mould, must all die too. And our own prudence should hereupon advance one step further, and apprehend it a most covetable thing, that the temper of our minds might comply with this unalterable state of our case; and that we be in a disposition, since we must die, to die willingly, and with our own consent. Nothing can be more irrational, or unhappy, than to be engaged in a continual quarrel with necessity, which will prevail, and be too hard for us at last. No course is so wise in itself, or good for us, as to be reconciled to what we cannot avoid; to bear a facile yielding mind towards a determination which admits of no repeal.

And the subject, now to be insisted on, may help us to improve the sad occasion to this very important purpose; and show us that dying, which cannot be willed for itself, may be joined with somewhat else which may, and ought to be so; and in that conjunction become the object of a rational, and most complacential willingness: a subject recommended to me, (though not

the special text) by one, than whom I know no man that was better able to make a fit choice; as (in the present case) none could have that right to choose. I cannot stay to discuss and open the most fruitful, pleasant series of discourse, in the foregoing verses, though there will be occasion to reflect somewhat upon it by and by; but, in the text, the apostle asserts two things concerning the temper of his spirit in reference to death: His *confidence*, and *complacency*; θαῤῥοῦμεν, καὶ εὐδοκοῦμεν.

First. His confidence, or his courage and fortitude, "we are confident, I say;" he had said it before, (*v.* 6,) "We are always confident;" and assigned the cause: "knowing that while we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord:" and declared the kind of that knowledge, (*viz.* which he had of that presence of the Lord, whereof he was deprived by being present in the body) that is, that it was the knowledge of faith, not of sight. *v.* 7. Now here he adds: "We are confident, I say." It notes a deliberate courage, and the fixedness of it; that it was not a sudden fit, a passion soon over. He had said above, θαῤῥοῦντες πάντοτε, "We are confident at all times;" it was his habitual temper. And here the ingemination signifies increase, as if he had said, "We grow more and more bold and adventurous, while we consider the state of our case, and what we suffer by our presence in the body. Sense of injury or damage heightens and adds an edge unto true valour. We would venture upon a thousand deaths, if the matter were left entirely to our own option, rather than be thus withheld any longer from the presence of our blessed Lord; a thing whereof nothing but duty to him could make us patient. We are not destitute of the fortitude to enable us even to rush upon death, without more ado, if he did say the word; but as yet he bids us stay, and his supreme and holy will must in all things determine ours." Therefore it is immediately subjoined, in the midst of this high transport, (*v.* 9,) "Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we might be accepted of him," or well-pleasing to him, (εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ εἶναι)—we less mind the pleasing ourselves, than him. We are indifferent to life or death, being in the body or out of it, in comparison of that; his pleasure is more to us than either. Here the highest fortitude yields and submits itself otherwise, and for his own part, and as to what concerned his own inclination singly, and in the divided sense. The apostle to his confidence doth,—

Secondly, Add complacency. "We are better pleased," (εὐδοκοῦμεν μᾶλλον). This is a distinct thing; (a valiant man will venture upon wounds and death, but is not pleased with them) but in reference to so excellent an object and occasion, they must mingle, and the latter runs into the former. "We are willing rather (as we read it) to be absent from the body, and present

with the Lord." The word which we read "willing," signifies to approve or like well, not a merely judicious, but complacential approbation; the word, whence comes the *εὐδοκία* often ascribed to God in Scripture, which signifies the high satisfaction he takes in all his purposes and determinations. The *εὐδοκίαν θελήματος*, (Ephes. i. 5,) is certainly no tautology, but speaks how perfectly and pleasingly he agrees, and (as it were) consents with himself, in all that ever he had resolved on. This rather, says the apostle, is our *εὐδοκία*, the thing that would please us best, and wherein we should most highly satisfy ourselves. It would not be the matter of our submission only, or whereto we could yield, when we cannot help it; but of our highest joy and pleasure. According as we find it was with the Psalmist, (Ps. xvi.) in the same case, (which, though it had a further meaning in reference to Christ, had a true meaning as to himself also,) "therefore my heart is glad, my glory rejoices, my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in *sheol*, (the state of the dead,) nor suffer thine Holy One to see corruption, but wilt show me the path of life;" and no matter though it lie through the dark, shady vale, it leads, however, into that blessed presence of thine, (the same with that in the text) "where is fulness of joy, and unto that right hand (that high and honourable station) where are pleasures for evermore." Both these, the apostle's courage and fortitude, and his complacency or well-pleasedness, have express reference to the state of death, or of being absent from the body. The one respects it as a formidable (but superable) evil, the other as a desirable and most delectable good. But both have reference to it in its concomitancy, or tendency, *viz.* as absence from the body should be accompanied, (or be immediately followed) with being present with the Lord. The sense, therefore, of the whole verse may be fitly expressed thus: That it is the genuine temper of holy souls, not only to venture with confidence upon the state of absence, or separation from the body, but to choose it with great complacency and gladness, that they may be present with the Lord.

Body, we are not here to understand so generally, as if he affected, or counted upon a perpetual final state of separation from any body at all. No, the temper of his spirit had nothing in it so undutiful or unnatural; no such reluctation, or disposition to contend against the common lot of men, the law of human nature, and the comely order which the Author of our beings, and of all nature, hath settled in the universe; that whereas one sort of creatures, that have life, should be wholly confined to terrestrial bodies; another, quite exempt from them; ours should be a middle nature, between the angelical and the brutal; so as we should, with the former, partake of intellectual immortal spirit; and a mortal body made up and organized of

earthly materials, with the latter: which yet we might also depose, and reassume, changed and refined from terrene dross. The apostle's temper hath in it nothing of rebellion, or regret against this most apt and congruous order and constitution; he had no impatient, proud resentment of that gradual debasement and inferiority that, in this respect, we are "made a little lower than the angels." When Porphyry tells us, in the Life of Plotinus, that he blushed as often as he thought of his being a body, it was agreeable enough to his notion of the pre-existence of the soul; *i.e.* if it were true, that the original state of human spirits was the same with that of angels, (which this is no fit season to dispute against) and that by their own fault, some way or other, they lapsed and slid down into grosser matter, and were caught into vital union with it, there was just cause of shame indeed. Apuleius's transformation, (which many of you know what it means) if it had been real, was not more ignominious.

But it appears the apostle affected not a state, wherein he should be simply naked, or unclothed of any body at all; for he longs to be clothed upon with his heavenly house. *v.* 2. And whereas he tells us, (*v.* 4,) that which he groaned for, was not to be unclothed, but clothed upon; that being unclothed, doth not mean the act, but the state, *i.e.* that he did not covet or aspire a perpetual final state of being naked, or without any body at all. For so he speaks, (*v.* 3,) "If so be (as we read) that being clothed, we shall not be found naked." The particle εἴγε admits to be read, "since that—inasmuch as—for truly;" and so the second and third verses will be connected thus: "In this (*v.* 2, *i.e.* 'for this,' *viz.* 'for this cause,' as ἐν often signifies causality, not 'in this house,' for τούτῳ and οἰκία will not agree) we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," *i.e.* "of heaven," or "suitable to heaven," (ἐξ denotes here, as often, the matter whereof a thing is formed and made) a body made up of a heavenly material; or (which is all one) an earthly body refined, and transformed into such a one. And then he subjoins the reason why his desire is so conditioned and limited, or runs only in this particular current, to have, not no body at all, but only not such a body. He wishes to have a body made more habile, and commodious, and fitter for the uses of a glorious soul; (which hath its own more inward clothing peculiar to itself, in respect whereof that of such a body would be an additional one, a superinvestiture, as the word ἐπενδύσασθαι imports) his desire is thus limited and modified for this reason; "inasmuch as, being thus clothed, we shall not be found naked," (*v.* 3,) or without any body at all; which the law of our creation admits us not to affect, or aspire unto. And therefore in qualifying our desire thus, we shall contain ourselves within our own bounds, and not offer at any thing whereof

humanity is, by the Creator's pleasure and constitution, uncapable. Therefore he inculcates the same thing over again. "We groan not to be unclothed, but only to be clothed upon," (*v.* 4;) where that "unclothed," (the thing he desired not) must signify the state, and not the act only, isevident; in that "being clothed" (the thing which he did desire) must plainly be so understood. For was it only an entrance into glory he desired, and not continuance in a glorified state? Nor can this being unclothed, much less, refer as an act to the present clothing of this earthly body, as if it were our being divested of that which he intended in this fourth verse, as the thing he desired not, for then the fourth verse would contradict this eighth, where he tells us he did desire it. The meaning then is, that he did not desire to be exempted from wearing a body, or to be without any at all: he did only covet to be absent from this body, (gross and terrene as now it was) that he might be present with the Lord; with which he found being in such a body, and in the several accompanying circumstances of this bodily state, to be inconsistent. Wherefore it was a terrestrial body, ("the earthly house of this tabernacle," as it is, *v.* 1,) which he was now better pleased to quit upon this account.

And I say it is the genuine temper of a holy soul to be like-minded, not their constant, explicit, discernible sense. We must allow for accidents, (as we shall note afterwards), but when they are themselves, and in their right mind, and so far as the holy divine life doth prevail in them, this is their temper.

And now, that I may more fully open this matter to you, I shall,—

I. Endeavour to unfold, somewhat more distinctly, the state of the case, in reference whereto good and holy souls are thus affected.

II. Shall show you what is their true and genuine temper, or how it is that they stand affected in reference to that case.

III. Shall discover how agreeable this temper is to the general frame and complexion of a holy soul.

IV. And then make such reflections upon the whole, as may be more especially useful to ourselves.

I. We are to take, as much as we can, a distinct view and state of the case. We see the apostle speaks by way of comparison, εὐδοκοῦμεν μᾶλλον, "we are willing rather." We are, therefore, to consider, (that we may comprehend clearly the true state of this case) what the things are which he compares; and between which his mind might be supposed, as it were, to have been before (at least in order of nature before) in some suspense, till at last it come so complacentially to incline, and be determined this one way. Take the account of the whole case in these particulars.

1. There are here two principal terms, between which the motion and inclination of such a mind lies from the one to the other—the Lord and the body. Both do as it were attract and draw, (or are apt to do) two several ways. The Lord strongly draws on the one hand, and the body hangs on, and holds, and draws in as strongly to itself as it can, on the other: the body as having us present in it; and how? not locally only, but in the way of vital union, and communion with it. And that shows how we are to understand being present with the Lord, too, not by a mere local presence, but of more intimate vital union and commerce. Where, as in the union between the soul and body, the more excellent communicates life, the other receives it; so it must be here. Though now the Lord is present thus, in some measure, (which this attraction supposes) yet speaking comparatively, that presence is absence, in respect of what we are to look for hereafter. Both these unions are very mysterious, and both infer very strong and powerful drawing, or holding together of the things so united.

There is no greater mystery in nature than the union between the soul and body. That a mind and spirit should be so tied and linked with a clod of clay, that, while that remains in a due temper, it cannot by any art or power free itself! It can by an act of the will move a hand, or foot, or the whole body; but cannot move from it one inch. If it move hither and thither, or by a leap upward do ascend a little, the body still follows; it cannot shake or throw it off. We cannot take ourselves out; by any allowable means we cannot, nor by any at all, (that are at least within mere human power) as long as the temperament lasts. While that remains, we cannot go; if that fail, we cannot stay; though there be so many open avenues, (could we suppose any material bounds to hem in or exclude a spirit), we cannot go out or in at pleasure. A wonderful thing! and I wonder we no more wonder at our own make and frame in this respect; that we do not, with reverent submissive adoration, discern and confess how far we are outwitted, and overpowered by our wise and great Creator; that we not only cannot undo his work upon us, in this respect, but that we cannot so much as understand it. What so much akin are a mind and a piece of earth, a clod and a thought, that they should be thus affixed to one another; or that there should be such a thing in nature as thinking clay? But hereupon, what advantage hath this body upon the soul and spirit! In the natural union is grounded a moral one of love and affection; which (on the soul's part) draws and binds it down with mighty efficacy.

Again, how mysterious and ineffable is the union of the Lord and the soul; and how more highly venerable, as this is a sacred mystery! And who would not admire at their proud

disdainful folly, that while they cannot explain the union between the soul and body, are ready to jeer at their just, humble, and modest ignorance, that call this other a mystical union! or, because they know not what to make of it, would make nothing, and will not allow there should be any such thing, or would have it be next to nothing. Have those words no sense belonging to them, or not a great sense, (1 Cor. vi. 17,) "But he that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit?" And, upon this supernatural union also, (be it what it will) methinks the binding and drawing power of love should not be less!

2. We must conceive in our minds, as distinctly as we can, the peculiar adjuncts of each of these more principal terms; *i.e.* on the part of the body first, we are to consider a sensible, a grossly corporeal world, to which this body doth connaturalize us, and whereto we are attempered by our being in the body, and living this bodily life. This body, while we live in it, is the *terminus uniens*, the medium, the unitive bond between us and it. In this world we find ourselves encompassed with objects that are suitable, grateful, and entertaining to our bodily senses, and the several principles, perceptions, and appetites that belong to the bodily life; and these things familiarize and habituate us to this world, and make us, as it were, one with it. There is, particularly, a bodily people, as is intimated in the text, that we are associated with by our being in the body. The words ἐνδημῆσαι and ἐκδημῆσαι, in this verse, (and the same are used verse the sixth and ninth) signify there is such a people, of which we are, and from which we would be dissociated; ἔνδημος, is *civis, incola*, or *indigena*, "an inhabitant," or native among this or that people; as ἔκδημος is *peregrinus*, "one that lives abroad," and is severed from the people he belonged unto. The apostle considers himself, while in the body, as living among such a sort of people as dwell in bodies, a like sort of people to himself; and would be no longer a home-dweller with these, but travel away from them, to join and be a dweller with another people.

For also, on the other hand, he considers "with the Lord," an invisible world, where he resides; and an incorporeal people he presides over. So that the case here is, are we willing to be dispeopled from this bodily sort of people, and peopled with that incorporeal sort, the world and community of spirits?

3. It is further to be considered in this case, that we are related both ways, related to the body, and related to the Lord; to the one people, and the other; the one claims an interest in us, and so doth the other. We have many earthly alliances, it is true, and we have many heavenly; we are related to both worlds, and have affairs lying in both. And now what mighty pleadings might the case admit, on the one hand and the other? Were the body, apart, capable of pleading for itself, to this effect

it must bespeak the soul: "I am thy body, I was made and formed for thee, and, someway, by thee. Thou hast so long inhabited and dwelt with me, and in me. Thou art my soul, my life, my strength; if thou be absent, I am a carcass, and fall to dirt; and thou wilt be a maimed thing, and scarce thy whole self." But though it cannot dictate, and do not utter such words, nature doth itself plead more strongly than words can.

And again, how much more potently might the Lord plead for his having the soul more closely united, and intimately conversant with himself! "Thou art one of the souls I have loved and chosen, which were given to me, and for which I offered up my own soul. I have visited thee in thy low and abject state, said to thee in thy blood, 'Live,' have inspired thee with a heavenly, sacred, divine life, the root and seminal principle of a perfect, glorious, eternal life. Let this body drop, which hath been long thy burden! Let it fall and die, it matters not! Yet since thou lovest it, I will restore it thee again, pure and glorious, like mine own. 'I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' John xi. 25. Never fear to venture thyself with me, nor to commit thy body to my after-care."

And now all the question will be, Which alleges the more considerable things? and the matter will be estimated, as the temper of the soul is. An earthly sordid soul, when the overture is made to it of such a translation, will be ready to say, as the Shunamite (2 Kings iv. 13,) did to the prophet, when he offered to speak for her to the king, (perhaps that her husband might be be called to court, and made a great man) "I dwell among my own people;" (an answer that in her case well expressed the true greatness of a contented mind, but in this case nothing more mean)—I am well where I am, and dwell among a people like myself. So saith the degenerate abject soul, sunk into a deep oblivion of its own country; Here I dwell a fixed inhabitant of this world, among a corporeal people, where I make one. And we find how it is with this sort of people, each one charms another, and they grow familiar, have mutual ties upon one another, and there is a loathsomeness to part. Especially as here, in this lower world, we are variously disposed, and cast into several mutual relations to one another; husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, all dwelling in bodies alike, cohabiting, eating and drinking daily, and conversing together. These are great and sensible endearments, by which the minds of men become, as it were knit, and united to one another. How are men's spirits fixed to their own countries! *Nescio quâ natale solum dulcedine*——it is by an inexpressible pleasure and sweetness, that the people of one country are, as it were, linked and held together.

But would not a heavenly, new-born soul say, "No, this is none of my country, I seek a better, and am here but a pilgrim and stranger; this is none of my people?" So it was with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that conversed in the earthly Canaan, but as in a strange country; their mind being gone towards that other, which they sought. And accordingly you find it said of each of them, in their story, when they quite left this world (as also of Moses and Aaron, afterwards) that they were gathered to their people; a people that were more their own. And surely, as God (who was not ashamed to be called their God) is not the God of the dead, but of the living; we must understand this was not the congregation of the dead, to which these were gathered, otherwise than in a low, relative sense, as to us only and our world. Holy men, as they die out of one world, are born into another, to associate with them that dwell in light; and be joined to a glorious community above, the general assembly, the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; where all love and adore, praise and triumph together.

4. It is again to be taken into the state of this case, that we have, one way or other, actual present notices of both the states, which both sorts of objects, that stand in this competition, belong unto:—of the one, by sense and experience; we so know what it is to live in the body, and in a sensible world, and among a corporeal people:—of the other, by faith; by believing as we are told by one who we are sure can have no design or inclination to deceive us. "There are many mansions," saith he, in my Father's house, as good accommodations, as suitable society, (and sufficiently numerous, which the many mansions implies) to be sure, as any you have met with here. Faith is, in this, to serve us instead of eyes; "it is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of the things not seen," (Heb. xi. 1;) as we have the notion of a country where we have not been, by the description of a person whom we can trust, and that we think intends not to abuse us by forgeries and false representations. In reference to this country, we walk and guide ourselves by sight, in our converses and affairs, wherein we have to do with it; as to that other, by faith; as (*v.* 7) it is implied.

5. Yet further it is to be considered, that this body, and this bodily people and world, have the present possession of us. And though the spiritualized mind do, as it were, step forth and place itself between both, when it is to make its choice; yet the objects of the one sort are much nearer, the other are far distant and much more remote.

6. That it cannot but be apprehended, that though the one sort of things hath the faster hold, the other sort are things of greater value; the one hath the more entire present possession of us, the other, the better right. Thus we see the case stated.

II. We are next to show what the temper is of a holy soul, (*i.e.* its proper and most genuine temper) in reference to this supposed state of the case. We are willing rather, or have a more complacential inclination, to be unpeopled from the body, and this bodily sort of people; and to be peopled with the Lord, and that sort of incorporeal people, over which he more immediately presides in the upper world. He speaks comparatively, as the case requires; and because all comparison is founded in somewhat absolute, therefore a simple disposition both ways, is supposed. Whence then,—

1. This temper is not to despise, and hate the body; it imports no disdainful aversion to it, or to this present state.

2. Nor is it an impetuous, precipitant tendency towards the Lord, impatient of delay, mutinous against the divine disposal; or that declines present duty, and catches at the βραβεῖον, the crown and prize, before the prescribed race be run out. A holy man is at once dutiful and wise; as a servant he refuses not the obedience of life; and as a wise man,* embraces the gain of death.

3. But it is considerate, the effect of much foregoing deliberation, and of a thorough perspection of the case; εἰδότες, (*v.* 6,) knowing, or considering, that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. This choice is not made blindly, and in the dark.

4. It is very determinate and full, being made up of the mixture of fortitude and complacency, as was said; the one whereof copes with the evil of being severed from the body; the other entertains the good of being present with the Lord. Therefore this is the sense of a pious soul in the present case: "I do indeed love this body well, and reckon it a grievous thing to be severed from it, if that part of the case be singly considered, and alone by itself; but considering it in comparison with the other part, what is this body to me? What is it, as an object of love, in comparison of being with the Lord? What is death to me as an object of fear, in comparison of being absent from the Lord; which is a death many thousand times more deadly than the other?"

III. The agreeableness of this temper to the general frame and complexion of a holy soul, as such: which will appear, if we consider—what sort of a frame or impression, in the general, that is that doth distinguish a sincerely pious person from another man—and the more eminent principles in particular that are constituent of it, and do, as it were, compose and make it up.

1. The general frame of a holy soul, as such, is natural to it. It is not an artificial thing, a piece of mechanism, a lifeless en-

* Ambros. de Bono Mortis.

gine, nor a superficial, an external form, an evanid impression. It is the effect of a creation (as Scripture often speaks) by which the man becomes a new creature, and hath a nature peculiar to him, as other creatures have; or of regeneration, by which he is said to be born anew. Which forms of speech, whatever they have of different signification, do agree in this, that they signify a certain nature to be the thing produced. This nature is said to be divine, (2 Pet. i. 4,) somewhat born of God, as it is expressed, (1 John v. 4,) and in many places more. And it is an intellectual nature, or the restored rectitude of such a being. Now who can think but what is so peculiarly from God, a touch and impress from him upon an intelligent subject, should with design, choice and complacency, tend to him, and make the soul do so? Especially, when it is so purposely designed for remedy of the apostacy, wherein men are revolted and gone off from him? Will he suffer himself to be defeated in a design upon which he is so industriously intent? Or is it supposable the all-wise God should so mistake himself, as to do such a work upon the spirit of man, on set purpose for an end which it is no way apt to serve; yea, and when he now takes him in hand a second time? Nor can it be but this impression of God upon the soul must have principal reference to our final state. It is a kind of nature, and must therefore tend to what is most perfect in its own kind. But we need not reason, in a matter wherein the word of God so plainly unfolds the scope, and the success of this his own work. By it we are said to be "alive to God, through Jesus Christ," (Rom. vi. 11,) to turn, and move, and act towards him, as many Scriptures speak; and towards him, as he is most perfectly to be served, and enjoyed, in the most perfect state of life.

We are said to be "begotten again to a lively hope (1 Pet. i. 3, where hope is taken objectively, as the following words show,) to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." And when, elsewhere, it had been said: "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of him," (1 John ii. 29,) there is immediately subjoined, (*ch.* iii. 1, 2,) a description of the future blessedness; whereto it is presently added, (*v.* 3,) "And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure;" implying the hope of that blessed state to be connate, implanted as a vital principle of the new and divine nature. And all hope, we know, involves desire in it; which is here intimated to be so powerful and prevailing, as to shape and form a man's whole course to an agreeable tenor; which it could not do, if hope were not superadded to desire; for no man pursues an end whereof he despairs. And what else is living religion, but a tendency to blessedness? a seeking honour, glory, and immortality, by a patient continu-

ance in well doing. Rom. ii. 7. Nor need we look further than this context, for evidence that this divine impression upon the soul hath this reference; for when (*v.* 4,) the apostle had avowed the fervour of his desire after that state wherein mortality should be swallowed up of life, he immediately adds, (*v.* 5,) "Now he that hath wrought us for this self-same thing, is God," &c. And indeed, after that transforming touch, the great business of such a soul in this world is but a dressing itself for the divine presence, a preparation for that state wherein we are for ever to be with the Lord. And it is not only an incongruity, but an inconsistency; not only that which is not fit, but not possible, that a man should ever design that as his end, which he cares not ever to attain; or that for his last end, which he doth not supremely desire.

2. If we consider particular principles that belong to this divine nature, the more noble and eminent are faith and love. The former is the perceptive, visive principle; the other the motive, and fruitive. And these, though they have their other manifold references, have yet, both, their final to that state of absence from this body, and presence with the Lord; the one eyeing, the other coveting it, as that wherein the soul is to take up its final rest. Here some consideration should be had of objections, that some may be apt to make use of, to shift off the urgency of this truth, and excuse the unsuitable temper of their spirits to it.

(1) That they are unassured about their states Godward, and how can they be willing to die, and be absent from the body, or not be afraid of the Lord's presence, whom they may, for aught they know, find an angry, vindictive Judge, when they appear before him?

Answer. This, which is the most considerable objection that the matter admits of, if it were directly pointed against this truth, as it hath been laid down, would answer itself. For it is not dying simply that is the object of this inclination, but dying conjunctly with being with the Lord, in his blessed, joyous presence. Do not therefore divide the object, and that objection is no objection. You are unwilling to die, and be banished the divine presence; but are you unwilling to die, and enjoy it? Or, upon supposition you should, are you willing? This is all that we make characteristical, and distinguishing. Where there is only an aversion to leave this bodily life and state, upon a fear we shall not be admitted into that blessed presence; there is only an accidental obstruction to the more explicit, distinct, and and discernible exertions of desire this way; which obstruction, if it be removed, the soul would then follow the course which the divine and holy principle in it doth naturally incline to. But the mortal token is, when there is no such doubt, and

yet there is still a prevailing aversion; when men make no question, if they die they shall go to God, and yet they are not willing to go. In the former case, there is a supreme desire of being with God, only suspended; take off that suspension, and that desire runs its natural course. In the other case, there is no desire at all. And the difference is, as between a living man that would fain go to such a place, but he is held, and therefore goes not; and one that is not held, but is dead, and cannot stir at all. For the life of the soul towards God is love; aversion, therefore, is (not an absolute, but) a respective death, or, *quoad hoc*, a death towards him, or as to this thing, *viz.* being with him.

(2.) As for the objection of being more serviceable to children, friends, relations, or the glory of God in the world, and his church in it; upon which last account this apostle, (Phil. i. 22, 23, 24,) though he express a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, yet is in a strait, and seems also very well pleased to abide in the flesh a longer time; he can himself best judge of our serviceableness. The meaning is not that we should be willing to leave the body before he would have us, but that we should not be unwilling then. And because we know not when his time will be, and it may be presently for aught we know; we should be always willing and desirous, upon that supposition. Our desire herein should not be absolute, and peremptory, but subordinate, and apt to be determined by his will; which can determine nothing but what will be most for his own glory, and for their best good who belong to him.

But as to this instance of the apostle, we must consider what there was peculiar in the apostle's case, and what is common, or ought to be, to all serious Christians. There is no doubt there was this more peculiar to him, (and to persons in such a capacity and station as his was) *viz.* as he was an apostle, he was one that had seen the Lord, which was a qualification for the more special work of that office; whereupon he was, as an eye-witness, to testify of his resurrection; upon which so great a stress lay, in asserting the truth of the Christian religion, and in propagating it with the greater assurance in the world. To testify as an apostle, therefore, could not be done by one of a following age. And it is very probable when he expresses, to the Philippians, (*v.* 25,) his knowledge he should abide and continue yet longer with them all, *i.e.* with the Christian church in the world, (for we cannot suppose he was to continue at Philippi,) for the furtherance of the common cause of the Christian faith, which was their common joy, (and which would no doubt be increased intensively and extensively at once) he had some secret intimation, that all his work in this kind was not yet over. Nor were such monitions and advertisements unfrequent with the apostles, that

specially related to the circumstances of their work. And so entirely was he devoted to the Christian interest, that wherein he saw he might be so peculiarly serviceable to it, he expresses a well-pleasedness to be so, as well as a confidence that he should; as we all ought to do, in reference to any such significations of the divine will concerning us, if they were afforded to us. But as to what there is, in this instance, that is common and imitable to the generality of Christians, it is no other than what we press from the text we have in hand; a desire to depart, and be with Christ, as that which is far better for us; submitted to the regulation of the divine will, as to the time of our departure, and accompanied with a cheerful willingness to serve him here, to our uttermost, in the mean time. But we have withal little reason to think we can do God greater service, or glorify him more here, than above. There is, indeed, other service to be done below, which is necessary in its own kind, and must, and shall be done by some or other. But is our service fit, in point of excellency and value, to be compared with that of glorified spirits in the upper regions? We serve God by doing his will, which is, sure, most perfectly done above. And our glorifying him, is to acknowledge and adore his glorious excellencies; not to add the glory to him which he hath not, but to celebrate and magnify that which he hath: whereof certainly the large minds of glorified creatures are far more capable. He never needs hands for any work he hath to do, but can form instruments as he pleases. And what is our little point of earth, or any service that can be performed by us here, in comparison of the spacious heavens, and the noble employments of those glorious orders of creatures above, which all bear their parts in the great affairs of the vast and widely extended heavenly kingdom? We might as well suppose, that because there is, in a prince's family, employment below stairs for cooks, and butlers, or such like underlings; that therefore their service is more considerable than that of great officers and ministers of state.

3. And for what may be thought, by some, that this seems an unnatural inclination; we must understand what we say, and what our own nature is, when we talk of what is natural, or unnatural to us. Ours is a compounded nature. That is not simply unnatural, that is contrary to an inferior nature, and agreeable to a superior. The most deeply fundamental law of the intellectual nature in us, was to be most addicted to the supreme good. The apostacy of this world from God, and its lapse into carnality, is its most unnatural state. To have an inclination to the body is natural, but to be more addicted to it than to God, is most contrary to the sincere dictates of original, pure, and primitive nature.

IV. There are now, for our use, many things to be inferred.

1. We see here, from the immediate connection between being absent from the body, and present with the Lord, there is no place for the intervening sleep of the separate soul. Can such a presence with the Lord, as is here meant, consist with sleeping? Or is sleeping more desirable than the converse with him our present state admits? But of this, much is said elsewhere.

2. Death is not so formidable a thing as we commonly fancy. "We are confident, and willing rather." There is a fortitude that can oppose the terrors of death, and overcome. How many have we known die triumphing!

3. We see that men of spiritual minds have another notion of that which we call self, or personality, than is vulgar and common. For who are the *we* that speak of being absent from the body, and present with the Lord? The body seems excluded that notion, which we know cannot be absent from itself. How like in sound is this to *Animus cujusque is quisque*, or "that the soul is the man." I would not, indeed, drive this so high as some Platonists are wont to do, as if the man were nothing else but a soul, sometimes using a body; nor do therefore think the body is no more to him, than our clothes to the body, because the apostle in this context uses that similitude; for that is not to be conceived otherwise than (as is usual in such illustrations) with dissimilitude. A vital union must be acknowledged, only neither is it agreeable with their self-debasing thoughts, that seem to make the body the more considerable part of themselves, that measure good and evil by it, as if what were grateful to the body were simply good for them, and that which offends the body simply evil; that speak or think of themselves, as if they were all body, forget that there is belonging to them an ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, as well as an ὁ ἔξω, an "inner man," and an "outer:" that the latter may be decaying, when the other is renewed day by day;* that the Father of our spirits may often see cause to let our flesh suffer, (and, at last, perish) for the advantage of our spirits, (Heb. xii. 9, 10;) so distinct are their interests and gratifications, and sometimes inconsistent. When men make, therefore, this bodily, brutal self their centre and end, how sordid and unchristian is their temper! And how reprovable by some more noble-minded pagans, that had better learned the precept inculcated by some of them, of reverencing themselves! Of whom we find one† speaking, with a sort of disdain, "Is this body, I?" Another‡ saying, he might be killed and not hurt; and upbraiding to his friends their ignorance, when they inquired how he would be buried; as if he could be buried, who, he said, should be gone far enough out of

* 2 Cor. iv. 16. † Epict. ‡ Socrat.

their hands. Another,* that the tyrant that made him to be beaten to death with iron mallets, might break that vessel of his, but himself he could not touch.

4. We learn, that when God removes any of our dear godly friends and relatives out of the body, though he displease us, he highly pleases them; for it is that they desire rather. And we are sure he pleases himself, for what can induce him, or make it possible to him to do any thing against his own pleasure? We are too apt to consider our own interest and satisfaction apart from theirs and God's, in such cases. And hence is that too vulgar and practical error among many very serious Christians, that when such as are dear to them are taken away, they reckon their thoughts are to be principally employed in considering such a thing as afflictive, or punitive to them. It is true that the affliction of that, as well as of any other kind, should put us upon very serious inquiry and search what the sin is, that may more especially have deserved it. But that ought, upon all occasions, to be principally considered in any case, that is principal. As God did not make such a creature principally to please me, so nor doth he take away such a one principally to displease me. God's interest is supreme, their own next, mine comes after both the other. Therefore, when the stream of thoughts and affections hath run principally, in such a case, upon our own affliction, it is time to check it, and begin to consider with some pleasure, how the Lord and that translated soul are now pleased in one another! He hath his end upon his own creature, and it hath its end and rest in him.

5. We see the admirable power of divine grace, that it prevails against even the natural love of this bodily life; not where discontent and weariness of life contribute, but even where there is a willingness to live too, upon a valuable consideration, as this apostle doth elsewhere express himself, *viz.* in the place before noted: and how easily the divine pleasure could reconcile him to life, notwithstanding what is said in the text, is sufficiently signified in the words immediately following it. And the effect is permanent, not a sudden transport; (wherein many are induced to throw away their lives, upon much lower motives) this appears to be an habitual inclination. At distant times, we find the apostle in the same temper. That is not surely from the power of nature, that is so much against it, as the stream of nature now runs, *i.e.* that a man should be willing to be plucked in pieces, and severed from himself! And we see, (*v.* 5,) whereto it is expressly ascribed: "He that hath wrought us to the self-same thing, is God."

6. How black is their character, and how sad their state, that

* Anaxarch.

are more addicted to their body, and this bodily life, than to the Lord, and that holy blessed life we are to partake in with him! Their character is black and horrid, as it is diverse from that which truly belongs to all the people of God, that ever lived on earth; and so doth distinguish them from such, and place them among another sort of men that belong not to him; such as have their portion in this life, their good things here, and who are to expect nothing hereafter, but woe and wailing. And who would not be affrighted, that finds a mark upon him that severs him from the whole assembly of the just and the blessed? Their state is also, therefore, sad and dismal, inasmuch as what they place their highest felicity in, (their abode in the body) they know will continue but a little while. Who could ever, by their love of this bodily life, procure it to be perpetuated; or by their dread of mortality, make themselves immortal? Have not others, in all former ages, loved the body, and this world as much? And what is become of them? Hath not death still swept the stage from generation to generation, and taken all away, willing or unwilling? To have all my good bound up in what I cannot keep, and to be in a continual dread of what I cannot avoid, what can be more disconsolate? How grievous will it be to be torn out of the body; not to resign the soul, but have it drawn forth as a rusty sword out of the sheath; a thing which our utmost unwillingness will make the more painful, but cannot defer! "No man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit, nor hath he power in death." Eccles. viii. 8. How uncomfortable, when the Lord's presence, the common joy of all good souls, is to me a dread! By the same degrees by which an abode in the body is over desired, is that presence dreaded and disaffected. And how deplorate is the case, when this body is the best shelter I have from that presence! Would I lurk in the body, and lie hid from the presence of the Lord? How easily, and how soon will my fortress be beaten down and laid in the dust, and I be left naked and exposed! And then how fearful things do ensue! But what now, doth this fearful case admit of no remedy? It can admit but of this only one, which therefore I would now recommend and press, the serious, effectual endeavour of being, to a just degree, alienated from the body, and of having the undue love repressed and wrought down, of this bodily life. Mistake not; I go not about to persuade all promiscuously, out of hand and without more ado, to desire death, or absence from the body. The desires of reasonable creatures should be reasonable, the product of valuable considerations and rational inducements. The present case of too many, the Lord knows, admits not they should be willing to die. Who are they that they should desire the day of the Lord, a day of such gloominess and darkness, as it is likely,

should it now dawn, to prove to them? No, but let all endeavour to get into that state, and have their affairs in such a posture that they may be, upon good terms, reconciled to the grave; and that separation from the body may be the matter, with them, of a rational and truly Christian choice. And since, as hath been said, there are two terms between which the inclination and motion of our souls, in this case, must lie, from the one to the other, *viz.* the body, and the Lord; life in the body, and with the Lord; let such things be considered on both hands, as may justly tend to diminish and lessen our inclination and love to the one, and increase it towards the other; so as that, all things being considered, and upon the whole, this may be the reasonable and self-justifying result, to be well-pleased rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. And,—

(1.) On the part of the body and this bodily life, consider, how costly it is to you! You lay out upon it (the most do) most of your time, thoughts, cares; the greater part most, or even all, of your estates. All the callings you can think of in the world, and which all help to maintain at no little expense, are wholly for the body; what costly attendants must it have of cooks, bakers, brewers, mercers, physicians, lawyers, and what not? One only excepted that refers to the soul. And again, when all is done, how little serviceable is it! when you would employ it, sometimes it is sick, sometimes lame, sometimes lames the mind and intellect too, that it cannot do its office, merely through the distemper of bodily organs; is at all times dull, sluggish, indisposed; "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Yea, moreover, how disserviceable! hinders your doing good, prompts to the doing much evil. What a world of mischief is done among men, merely by bodily lusts, and to serve fleshly appetite; these fill the world with confusion, and miseries of all sorts. All catch from others what they can, for the service of the body; hence is competition of interests and designs. No man's portion is enough for him to serve the body, (or the mind, as it is depraved by bodily inclinations) and so the world is torn by its inhabitants, countries wasted and laid desolate; religion itself made subservient to fleshly interest, and thence is the occasion of many a bloody contest, of oppressions, persecutions, and violences; whereby many times it so falls out, that such as are most vigorously engaged in a design of serving the body, destroy it, their own as well as other men's. And (which is most dreadful) souls are numerously lost and perish in the scuffle, yea, and very oft upon the account or pretence of religion, whose only design it is to save souls! And how many, to save their bodies, destroy even their own souls; not having learned

that instruction of our Saviour's, not to fear them that can only kill the body; or, being unable to suffer some lesser bodily inconveniences, apostatize, and abandon their religion, whereby that and their souls too, become sacrifices to the safety and accommodation of an idolized lump of clay! And how certainly (if a seasonable repentance do not intervene) do they, who only thus tempt the souls of other men, destroy their own! Nor can it be doubted, at this time of day, and after the experience of so many ages, wherein Christianity hath been so visibly and grossly carnalized, but that it is a religion perverted to the support of the bodily and animal interest, that hath thus embroiled the Christian world. How plain is it, that they who desire to make a fair show in the flesh, to strut in pomp, to glitter in secular grandeur and splendour, to live in unrebuked, sensual ease and fulness, are the men that would constrain others to their carnal observances! men that serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies. Who can think it is pure love to souls, and zeal for the true ends of the holy, peaceable religion of our blessed Jesus, that makes them so vexatious and troublesome to all whom their fleshly arm can reach and ruin, and whom their spirit and way cannot allure and win? Who that understands religion, and the true design of it, and the blessed end wherein it will shortly terminate, would not be glad to be rescued out of this large, diffusive, unquiet empire of the body, that extends itself over all things, mingling its odious impurities even with what is most sacred! Who would not long to be from under this reign of the beast, if he might have a fair way of escape! And where religion is not in the case, what multitudes of terrene creatures, earthly-minded men, are stupidly going down to perdition daily, and destroying their souls by mere neglect, while they are driving designs for the body; which yet, in the meantime, is at the best but a prison to the soul! O how could they love God, admire and praise him, were they once out of this body! But it is not enough to a subject, wherein love is implanted and is a part of its nature, to have only the prospect of what is unlovely, or be told only what is not to be loved. There must be somewhat to invite and draw, as well as to repel and drive off. Therefore—

(2.) Consider also, on the other part, "the Lord," and that life you are to transact and live with him. Little can now be said; you are not ignorant where much is, and your own thoughts may, upon much conversing with the holy oracles, suggest yet more. And you have need to use your thoughts here, the more largely, where your sense doth not instruct you, as on the other part it doth. Consider the description which you are copiously furnished with, both of Him and of the state in which you are to be present with him. Recount his glorious excellen-

cies, his immense and all-sufficient fulness, his wisdom, power, holiness, and love in absolute perfection. Consider his high, equal, comely, amiable regency over the blessed community above, that spiritual, incorporeal people, the pleased, joyful inhabitants of the celestial regions: and that he rules over them, and communicates himself universally to them, in a state of perfect light, purity, peace, love and pleasure, that is also immutable, and never to know end. There is nothing capable of attracting an intellectual nature, which is not here!

(3.) But, on both parts, suffer yourselves to be directed also.

[1.] Take heed of over-indulging the body, keep it in subjection, use it, and serve it not. Primitive nature, and the Creator's wise and holy pleasure, ordained it to serve. Lose not yourselves in it; take heed you be not buried where you should but dwell, and that you make not your mansion your grave. Mansion, do I say? Call it as this apostle doth, and another, (2 Pet. i.) your tabernacle only, a tent pitched for you, but for a little while. Every day look upon it, and without fond pity, as destined to rottenness and corruption; and as that, which when it ceases to be your clothing, must be worms' meat. Labour to make the thoughts easy and familiar to yourselves of leaving it; think it not an uncouth thing. How doth that part of the creation, that is inferior to you, abound with like instances; of fruits springing up out of this earth, and growing to ripeness and maturity, with husks, shells, or other integuments, which then fall off; such as never ripen, they and their enfoldings rot together! Esteem it your perfection, when your shell will fall off easily, and cleaves not so close, as to put you to pain when it is to be severed from you.

Endeavour the holy and heavenly nature may grow more and more mature in you; so death will be the more also an unregretted thing to your thoughts. By all means labour to overcome the fear of it, which that you might, our Lord also took a body. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. ii. 14, 15. Reckon not much of that fear, which is only the mere regret of sensitive nature, purely involuntary; and that can no more obey the empire of the mind, or be regulated by it, than you can make straight a crooked leg by a mere act of your will, or make your body not feel pain: a fear, from which the perfection of our nature, in our blessed Lord himself, was not exempt. But it is one thing to extinguish even that fear, another to overcome it; the former is impossible to you, the latter necessary. It is overcome, when a superior principle governs you and your resolu-

tions and course, as it did our Lord; he did not, because of it, spare himself and decline dying. You may feel, perhaps, somewhat of such a fear, (a secret shrug) when you are to be let blood, or have a wound searched. It governs not in such a less important case, when, being convinced it is requisite, you omit not the thing notwithstanding. Labour herein to be hardy, and merciless to this flesh, upon the forethoughts of the time when God will allow you to step forth, and go out of the body: and say to it, with an obdured mind, For all thy craving and shrinking, thou shalt be thrown off.

Labour it may not only not be the matter of your prevailing fear, but be the matter of your hope. Look towards the approaching season, with pleasant, cheerful expectation; aspire (as it belongs to you to do, who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, that blessed Spirit of adoption) and groan for the adoption, (the season of your being more solemnly owned for sons) *viz.* the redemption of the body. Rom. viii. 23. Which, though it ultimately refer to the resurrection, may be allowed to have an ncomplete meaning, in reference to death too; for I see not but ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος, may admit such a construction as ἀπολύτρωσιν τῶν παραβάσεων, (Heb. ix. 15,) *i. e.* that redemption of the body may mean redemption from it, wherein it is burdensome, a grievance and penalty, here, as well as there. The redemption of transgressions doth truly mean liberation from the penalty of them; from which penal evil of and by the body, (so materially, at least, it is,) we are not perfectly freed, as our blessedness is not perfect, till mortality be swallowed up of life, and all the adopted, the many sons, be all brought to glory together.

How happy in the meantime is your case, when death becomes the matter of your rational, well-grounded hope! You have many hopes, wherein you are liable to disappointment; you will then have one sure hope, and that will be worth them all; none can prevent you of this hope. Many other things, you justly hope for, are hindered by ill-minded men of their accomplishment; but all the wit and power of your most spiteful enemies, can never hinder you from dying. And how are you fenced against all the intervening troubles of life; *Nihil metuit qui optat mori*, "you have nothing to fear, if you desire to die;" nothing but what, at least, death will shortly put an end to. Make this your aim, to have life for the matter of your patience, and death of your desire.

[2.] On the other part, also, labour to be upon good terms with the Lord; secure it that he be yours. Your way to that is short and expedite, the same by which we become his, (Ezek. xvi. 8,) "I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine." Solemnly and unfeignedly accept him, and surrender

yourselves; without this who can expect but to hear from him at last, "Depart from me, I know you not?" Know of yourselves, demand an account, are you sincerely willing to be his, and to take him for yours, without limitation or reserves? Matters are then agreed between him and you, and who can break or disannul the agreement? Who can come between him and you? I often think of the high transport wherewith those words are uttered; "the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Phil. iii. 8. This is Christian religion, not in a system, but as it is a vital principle and habit in the soul, inclining us, making us propense towards our blessed Lord, addicting and subduing us to him, uniting us with him, whereby we come to know by inward sensations, to feel the transfusions of his spiritful light and influence, and our souls thereby caught and bound up in the bundle of life. So we have Christ formed within, his holy truth, doctrines, precepts, promises, inwrought into the temper of our spirits; and, as it follows in that context, (Phil. iii.) to have him, according to the states wherein he successively was, by correspondent impressions represented in us; so as that we come to bear the image of him, crucified, and dying, first; then reviving, and rising; and afterwards, ascending and glorified: "To know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; if, by any means, we might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." *v.* 10, 11.

Let us not be at rest till we find it thus, in some measure, with us. If we feel ourselves, after this manner, internally and initially conformed to him, this will be both a preparative, and a pledge of our future perfect conformity, both internal and external. It will fit us to be ever with the Lord, and assure us we shall, and can be no where else; that he and we shall not to eternity dwell asunder. We shall neither fear to be externally conformed to him in his death, to quit and lay down the body as he did; nor despair of attaining with him the resurrection of the dead, and of being present with him in glory: or, that he shall recover for us, out of the dust, our vile abject bodies, (the τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν) the body of our humiliation, wherein we were humbled, as he was in his, (as it follows in that, Phil. iii. 21,) and make it like his own glorious body, (σύμμορφον, conform, and agreeable) by that power, "by which he is able even to subdue all things to himself." In the mean time, as this present state admits, converse much with him every day; be not strangers to him, often recognize and renew your engagements to him. Revolve in your thoughts his interest in you, and yours in him; and the nearer relation which there is between him and you, than that between you and this body. Recount with yourselves the permanency and

lastingness of that relation; that whereas this body, as now it is, (a terrestrial body) will not be yours long, he is to be your God for ever and ever: that, though death must shortly separate you from this body, "neither life, nor death, principalities nor powers, things present, nor things to come, shall ever separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." While this body is a body of death to you, he is your life, your hope, and your exceeding joy; your better, more laudable, and more excellent self, more intimate to you than you can be to yourself, as hath been anciently, and often said; and for the obtaining whose presence, absence from the body is a very small matter.

A great prince,* in an epistle to that philosopher, tells him, "I seem to myself not to be a man, as the saying is, while I am absent from Jamblichus, or while I am not conversant (οὐ συνῶ) with him." That we can better endure our Lord's absence, is surely a thing itself not to be endured; we should labour that our acquaintance with him, (such as is fit to be between so great a majesty, and such mean creatures as we,) should grow daily; yea, and endeavour to make the thoughts more familiar to ourselves, of spiritual beings in the general: for we are to serve and converse with him in a glorious community of such creatures; "an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly and the church of the first-born, and the spirits of just men made perfect," (Heb. xii. 23,) in a region where an earthly body, remaining such, can have no place. Why do we make the thoughts of a spirit, out of a body, so strange to ourselves? We meet with hundreds of spirits in bodies, and moving bodies to and fro in the streets every day, and are not startled at it. Is a body so much nearer akin to us than a spirit, that we must have so mean a thing to come between, to mediate and reconcile us to it? Why are we afraid of what we are so nearly allied unto? Can we not endure to see or think of a man at liberty, (suppose it were a friend, or a brother) if we ourselves were in prison? The more easy you make the apprehension to yourselves of a disembodied spirit, *i. e.* free, I mean, of any terrestrial body, the better we shall relish the thoughts of Him who is the head of that glorious society you are to be gathered unto; for the Lord is that Spirit, the eminent, almighty, and all-governing Spirit, (to be ever beheld too in his glorified body, as an eternal monument of his undertaking for us, and an assuring endearment of his relation to us;) the better your minds will comply with the preconceived idea we are to entertain ourselves with, of the constitution, order, employment, and delights of that vast collection of heavenly associates we shall dwell with for ever: and the more will you still incline to be absent from this body, that (among them) you may be ever present with the Lord.

* Julian. Ep. ad Jamblic.

And if you thus cherish this pleasant inclination, think how grateful it will be, when it comes to be satisfied! How natural is that rest that ends in the centre, to which a thing is carried by a natural motion! How pleasantly doth the departed soul of that good gentlewoman, whose decease we lament, solace itself in the presence of her glorious Lord! I shall say little concerning her; you will have her just memorial more at large ere long. I had indeed the opportunity, by an occasional abode some days under the same roof, (several years before she came into that relation wherein she finished her course) to observe her strangely vivid and great wit, and very sober conversation. But the turn and bent of her spirit towards God and heaven, more remarkably appeared a considerable time after; which when it did, she showed how much more she studied the interest of her soul, than the body; and how much more she valued mental and spiritual excellencies, than worldly advantages, in the choice of her consort, whom she accepted to be the companion and guide of her life.

She gave proof herein of the real greatness of her spirit, and how much she disdained to be guided by their vulgar measures, that have not wit, and reason, and religion enough to value the accomplishments of the mind, and inner man; and to understand that knowledge, holiness, a heavenly heart, entire devotedness to the Redeemer, a willingness to spend and be spent in the service of God, are better and more valuable things, than so many hundreds, or thousands a year; and that no external circumstances can so far dignify a drunkard, an atheist, a profane wretch; as that (compared with one that bears such characters) he should deserve to be simply reckoned the better man; and that mere sober carnality and ungodliness suffice not to cast the balance; or that have so little of these qualifications for the making a true judgment, as to think that calling dishonourable and a diminution to man, that refers immediately to the soul and the unseen world, and that relates and sets him nearest to God.

She knew how to make her estimate of the honour of a family, and a pedigree, as things valuable in their kind; without allowing herself so much vanity, as to reckon they were things of the most excellent kind, and to which nothing personal could be equal; and well understood, of the personal endowments of the body and the mind, which were to have the preference. Her life might teach all those, especially of her own sex, that a life's time in the body, is for some other purposes than to indulge, and trim and adorn the body; which is most minded by them, who (as that shows) have, in the mean time, most neglected, and, God knows, most depraved and deformed souls. I hope her example, more fully and publicly represented, will more generally teach. In the mean time, this instance of our

common mortality should teach us all. We see this state of life in the body is not that we were finally made for; yet how few seriously look beyond it! And it is amazing to think how little the deaths of others signify, to the making us mind our own. We behave ourselves as if death were a thing only to be undergone by some few persons, here and there; and that the most should escape; and as if we took it for granted we should be of the exempted number. How soon are impressions, from such occasions, talked, and trifled, and laughed, and jested away! Shall we now learn more to study and understand our own natures; to contemplate ourselves, and our duty thereupon? that we are a mortal, immortal sort of creatures; that we are sojourners only in a body which we must shortly leave to dust and worms; that we are creatures united with bodies, but separable from them? Let each of us think, "I am one that can live in a body, and can live out of a body. While I live in one, that body is not mine, I dwell not in mine own:" that the body must be for the Lord, as he will then be for the body: that we shall dwell comfortless and miserable in the body, if we dwell in it solitary and alone, and have not with us a better inhabitant: that our bodies are to be mansions for a Deity, houses of religion, temples of the Holy Ghost. O the venerable thoughts we should have of these bodies upon this account! How careful should we be not to debase them, not to alienate them! If any man corrupt the temple of God, him will he destroy. 1 Cor. iii. 16. Will a man rob God, break and violate his house? How horrid a burglary! Shall we agree to resign these bodies, and this bodily life? Our meeting will have been to good purpose, might this be the united sense of this dissolving assembly: "Lord, here we surrender and disclaim (otherwise than for, and under thee) all right and title to these bodies and lives of ours. We present our bodies holy, acceptable, living sacrifices, as our reasonable service." Let us do so, and remember we are hereafter not to live to ourselves; nor to die, at length, to ourselves; but living and dying to be the Lord's.

THE

CHRISTIAN'S TRIUMPH OVER DEATH.

A FUNERAL SERMON,

ON THE DEATH OF

MRS. JUDITH HAMMOND.

DEDICATION.

TO THE REV. MR. HAMMOND.

Mr offering this discourse to the eye of the world, together with your own, shows how great power our ancient friendship hath given you over me; whereof I have the less unpleasant sense, believing you will understand it so; who, in great part, know how difficult my circumstances made it to me, to comply with your desire herein. Your opinion of the fitness of publishing so uncomposed a thing, discovers how far you were subject also to the same power; whose judgment I am little apt to distrust, where it meets not with this bias.

It will be a joy to me, if it help to mitigate your sorrow, which is in great part justified by the greatness of your loss, in being separated, after so long conversation, from so excellent a consort, that lived in this world so much above it.

I reckon it an evidence of the real greatness of her spirit, that she thought that so little a thing, wherein others place greatness; and that in almost forty years' acquaintance with you both, I should never hear of her nearness to a noble family, till, occasionally, since her death. It seems, the blood that filled her veins did not swell her mind. And her heavenly birth, and relation to the house and family of God, made her forget her earthly kindred and parents' house.

Sir, though whom God hath joined together, no man might put asunder; yet when he that made the union makes the separation, there is no saying to him, What dost thou? We must awhile tug with the difficulties of our state, and work; wherein the hope of helping some (as God shall graciously help us) to gain this victory over death, and of being at length, through his grace, victors ourselves, will be a constant relief and support to you, and

Your very respectful brother,

And fellow servant in the labours of the gospel,

J. H.

A SERMON.

1 Cor. xv. 54.

Death is swallowed up in victory.

The foregoing words signify this saying to have been, before, written elsewhere: "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up," &c. And we find it before written, (Isa. xxv. 8,) in express words, and (Hos. xiii. 14) in such as are equivalent. What their dependence or meaning is, in either of those places, cannot be discussed within our present narrow limits. Only it is sufficiently manifest, that sundry passages in the holy Scripture are said to be brought to pass, over and over, once and again; as that of Rachel's weeping for her children; and of God's bringing his Son out of Egypt; with divers others. This great saying may have had some partial and gradual accomplishment, within the current of time, when in reference to a people more specially related to God, and in some more notable delinquency and defection from him, he may have given a just but limited commission to death, to make great ravage and destructions among them; so that it hath even rode in triumph, made a huge carnage, strewed their country with carcasses, turned their rich land, more enriched with human blood, into an Aceldama, and thereupon, but into a place of sepulture and of graves; and yet, when it hath gone as far as his designed limits, and executed all his pleasure, he may have stopped it in its career, and said, "Hither thou shalt come, and no further;" now, cease and give over, (as Hos. xiii. 14;) and so may have ransomed the residue from the power of the grave, and been the destruction of their destroyers, plaguing them who were their plagues. This, in the next intention hereof, may respect the people of the Jews, who being returned from their (now foreseen) captivity, might in the prophetic style be spoken of as a people risen from the dead, and newly sprung up out of the grave; but might have a further

reference to the yet future state of the Christian church, as Isa. xxv. 6, 7, 8, seems to carry it; when so great a death as hath long been upon it, as well as the rest of the world, it may be hoped shall be swallowed up in a very glorious victory! But this saying is introduced here, as having its final and ultimate completion in conjunction with what is mentioned besides in this context, *viz.* when in the close and shutting up of time, the trumpet shall sound, as we are told elsewhere it shall at the coming of our Lord, and the dead (those that died in him, first,*) be raised, the living changed, so as to bear the heavenly Adam's image; "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality; then shall be brought to pass this saying, (whatever preludes thereto, as was written, there may have been before) Death is swallowed up in victory."

And according to this its fullest sense, is this saying to be the subject of our present consideration. The expression is highly rhetorical, but there is a most rational, solid sense intended under it; for which no words can be too big, or of too great a sound. Our business must be to explain and apply this saying. And,—

I. For explication of its rational import, we shall show,—the import, and—the reasonableness of it.

1. It imports, in general, God's determination to put a perpetual end to death, to make it cease *in perpetuum*, as a noted expositor expresses it,† showing that the parallel Hebrew phrase is usually rendered "for ever." (2 Sam. ii. 26; Jer. iii. 5; and in divers other places.) But that we may give a more distinct account of its meaning, several things are to be noted.

(1.) That death, as it is here spoken of, supposes a certain limited subject. Its being mentioned in this chapter, and elsewhere, as if it were itself a *suppositum*, and an intelligent designing one, is an elegant and a usual figure. The holy Scriptures, and common speech, abound with this sort of *prosopopœia;* and it hath its special usefulness, when (as in the present case) what we are more to remark, and consider with greater intention of mind, is so represented, *i. e.* when to things of minute, or of no entity, but of great concernment, (such mere privations as death, or sin) a sort of personality is ascribed, attended with terrible aspects and appearances; it tends more effectually to rouse our minds, and engage our attention, whether we are to consider and magnify our danger by them, or our deliverance, and to behold them as attempting upon us, or as overcome. But, speaking strictly, we must take things as in themselves they are. Death, therefore, must be considered in reference to some subject or other. Abstractly considered, it is but a notion. As it actually hath taken place, it must be the death of this or that person.

* 1 Thess. iv. 16. † Grot. in loc.

And as it is finally to be overcome, and have an end, it must have a limited subject, and not be understood of all, absolutely and universally; for then there would be no such thing as eternal death, which hath no end. And how the subject here supposed is to be limited, the series of discourse through the chapter shows; they are such as are Christ's, (*v.* 23,) and to whom he is peculiarly the first-fruits, (*ibid.*) such as shall bear his heavenly image, (*v.* 49;) and, as elsewhere, whose "vile bodies shall be made like his glorious one," (Phil. iii. 21;) such as shall have spiritual, incorruptible, immortal bodies like his, and with him inherit the kingdom of God, and through him obtain this victory. *v.* 50—57.

(2.) This limitation of death to be overcome, to such a subject only, connotes the extent of it to the whole of that subject, as that is composed of an inner and an outer man. 2 Cor. iv. 16. It were frigid and comfortless to suppose, if it were supposable, that this glorious conquest of death should extend no further than the giving us a fair specious outside; and that our mind and spirit should not partake, or be nothing the better for it. It is plain the apostle's scope through this chapter is more to assert the future subsistence of the soul, than the recomposure of the body, as his arguments show; though what was necessary to be said concerning the future state of that also, is not neglected. But what he is now saying, in this part of the chapter, concerns not what is common to men, but what is peculiar to good and holy men: and therefore, as it respects their nobler part, must intend more than its mere subsistence in another state, which is common to good and bad, and signify the perfection of the holy, divine life, which shall be at last entirely victorious, and swallow up death in its utmost extent, and specially as it was opposite to that life: death I mean, as it was so heavily incumbent upon the minds and spirits of good men themselves, and was their most intolerable burden; extorting from them such groans as that, (Rom. vii. 24,) "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!" Nor, indeed, is this death sensible or grievous, or ever felt, but where the opposite life hath some place. Total death knows no grievances, makes no complaints. They that lie buried in the earth, are in their own element, where no such thing weighs upon them; a terrene, carnal mind is no burden to such souls as are quite dead in trespasses and sins. I hope I need not tell you that though the souls of men are universally immortal in the natural sense, they are not so in the moral. Morality comprehends the means and end, virtue and felicity; or in terms more agreeable to our Christian ethics, or that are oftener heard by them that live under the gospel, holiness and blessedness. These are signified by spiritual life, or life in the

spiritually moral sense: and so are sin and misery, by the opposite death. And no man hath reason to think it strange, that life and death are estimated by such measures; or that a temper of spirit, habitually and fixedly good or evil, should be signified by being alive, or dead, if we consider how perfect an equivalency there is between them in the moral sense, and being naturally alive or dead. For wherein do we usually state the notion of natural life, but in a self-moving power? Now let any ordinary understanding be appealed to in the case, and who would not say it were as good not to be able to move at all, as to move in so perpetual disorder as never to attain any end such motion should serve for? The ends of a reasonable creature's motions must be duty to its Maker and felicity to itself. If all its motions be such as import constant hostility towards God, infelicity and torment to itself, this is to be dead; not simply and naturally, it is true, but respectively; and not in some bye and less considerable respect, but in respect of the principal and most important purposes of life. So that in full equivalency, such a one is as dead to all valuable intents and purposes whatsoever. Therefore such are only said to be alive, in a true and the most proper sense, that are "alive to God through Jesus Christ," (Rom. vi. 11,) or that do "yield themselves to God as those that are alive from the dead," (*v.* 13,) it being the proper business of their life to serve God, and enjoy him. Others, that only live in sinful pleasure, are "dead while they live." 1 Tim. v. 6. Nor hath such a notion of life and death been altogether strange, even among heathens, when we find it said by one of no mean note, That a wicked man is dead, as a soul may be said to die;* and to it, it is a death, when it is (too deeply†) plunged, immersed into the body, so as to be sunk down into matter, and replete with it. (Besides much more that might be produced from others of like import.) And how agreeable is this passage to that, (Rom. viii. 5,) "To be carnally minded is death."

Upon the whole, I cannot indeed conceive that since death is often taken, and that most reasonably, in so great a latitude, as to admit of comprehending this sense; and since, in these latter verses, the apostle is speaking of a final deliverance from it as the special privilege of such as are in union with Christ, not of what is common to all men; but that victory over death in this respect, as it imports aversion from God or indisposition towards him, must be within his meaning; and that he was far from confining it to bodily death only, or from intending, in reference to the soul, the mere natural immortality of that alone; but that death, in its utmost latitude, was now, in reference to this sort of men whom his present discourse intends, to be entirely

* Ὡς ἂν ψυχὴ θάνοι. † Βεβαπτισμένη, Plotin. Enn. 1.

swallowed up in victory, or in a perfect plenitude of victorious life, as 2 Cor. v. 4. So much, which was more requisite to be insisted on, being clear, we shall less need to enlarge upon what follows. As that,—

(3.) This victory supposes a war; or that life and death were before in a continual struggle. So we find the case is. Even this lower world is full of vitality; yet death hath spread itself through it, and cast over it a dark and dismal shadow every where, according as sin, which introduced it, is diffused and spread. Death is therefore mentioned as an enemy, *v.* 26. And so we understand it, natural death as an enemy to nature; spiritual, to grace. In the body, numerous maladies, and round about it, multitudes of adverse rencounters, are striving to infer death. In and about the mind and spirit, worse diseases and temptations have the like tendency. Temptations, I say, the mention whereof was not to be omitted, as pointing at the tempter, the wicked one, who first brought sin and death into this world of ours; and who is (though the concealed) the first and most proper seat of the enmity which gives death the denomination of an enemy; which is so called, indefinitely, the last enemy, that we might not understand it to be our enemy only, but more an enemy against God than us, from whom the spiteful apostate aimed and gloried to pluck away, and bury in death and ruin, the whole race of human creatures. In the mean time nature in all, and grace in the regenerate are counter-striving. In the former, the self-preserving principle is more sensibly vigorous, but less successful; but they who are born of God, are better assisted by their divine Keeper, in subordination to whom they are enabled effectually to keep themselves, that the wicked one (mortally) touches them not; (1 John v. 18,) but, as must be supposed, not without continual watching and striving, as in war is usual.

(4.) Where such a war and striving end not in victory on the one side, they end in victory on the other. This is consequent upon what hath been said of the limited subject here spoken of. Death is not universally overcome; with some it is left to be conceived therefore as a conqueror. We see how it is with the two hemispheres of our globe, when in the one, the light is chasing the darkness of the foregoing night, and we behold the morning gradually spreading itself upon the mountains, and it shines brighter and brighter unto perfect day; so in the other, a feebler light doth more and more retire and yield, till at length it be quite swallowed up in the victorious darkness of a black and horrid midnight. It is much after the same rate here, with this difference, that vicissitudes and alternations cease; and whether darkness and the shadow of death, or the light of life be finally victorious, they are so, as hath been said, for ever.

With the one sort, *i.e.* with the righteous, a vital light arises in the midst of darkness; a type of their spiritual, and a prelude to their eternal state. They have a quickening light within, under all clouds of present ignominy and trouble; and an eternal day awaits them. Now death worketh in them, and surrounds them on every side for awhile, and gains a temporary victory over their bodily life; which while it is doing, and their outward man is perishing, their inward man is renewed day by day. But at length even that vanquished life revives, and that more noble life, which is "hid with Christ in God," (Col. iii. 3,) and of which he says, "that whosoever lives, and believes in him, shall never die," (John xi. 27,) becomes perfect, for it is pure life; as that is said to be pure, which is *plenum sui, et minimum habet alieni*, "full of itself, without mixture of any thing alien from it;" having quite swallowed up whatsoever was opposite, or disagreeable. So doth life, in the several kinds and degrees of it, flourish with them in a permanent, perpetual, and most consistent state. And as regal power is often founded in just conquest, they do even "reign in life, by Jesus Christ." Rom. v. 17—21. But for the other sort, that sorry, pitiful, dying life they have, wherein they are even dead while they live, will be swallowed up in a victorious, eternal death; in which there remains to them a perpetual night, and the blackness of darkness for ever. We are next to consider,—

2. The reasonableness of the divine determination which this saying imports. And that is to be collected, by reminding who it is that hath so determined; he that can effect all his determinations, and do all his pleasure. The reason of his intendments and performances must be fetched from himself, and the perfection of his own nature; unto which nothing can be more agreeable. When death, let in by sin, hath been reigning, doing the part of a king, as Rom. v. 17, over so great a part of God's creation, it can be little suitable to him, who doth all things after the counsel of his will, (Eph. i. 11,) to let it reign for ever. Sometime it must be swallowed up in victory. Otherwise,—his own glory would suffer a perpetual eclipse, and—the felicity of his redeemed should never be complete. Neither of which, as we are taught to apprehend the state of things, can consist with the absolute perfection of his being.

(1.) Can we think it agreeable to him to suffer such a perpetual solecism or incongruity within his dominion, that when death, by means of a most criminal apostacy, had made so great an inroad into the nobler part of his creation, *i.e.* had broken in amongst creatures capable of immortality, (who indeed otherwise had not been capable of sin) and thereby darkened the glory which shone more brightly in such an order of creatures, it should be so always; *i.e.* that such a sort of creatures should be

perpetually continued, to be born, and sin, and die? Sometime we must think this course of things should have an end, and not by yielding an everlasting conquest to an enemy. We can well conceive it most worthy of God, when he had made such creatures, unto whom liberty was as agreeable as holiness and felicity, to leave them to themselves awhile, as probationers and candidates for that state of immortal life whereof they were not incapable. It well became a self-sufficient Being, and an absolute Sovereign, to let them understand dependence and subjection; and that their state was precarious, not his: to let them feel the cost of ungovernableness, and self-will, and the disagreeableness thereof to their condition who were not self-subsistent, and had not their good in their own hands; if, being put upon this trial, they would transgress, and open a way for death to come in upon them, the real loss could only be their own, and none of his. He had no reason therefore to prevent it, by so unseasonable an interposition, as should prevent the orderly connection between duty and felicity; *i.e.* the precedency of the former to the other. All this was a most unexceptionable procedure. But then, when being left to themselves, they as men, or as Adam, had transgressed, (Hos. vi. 7,) and done like themselves, *i.e.* like frail, mutable creatures, in their lapse into sin and death; how opportune was it for him, now, to do more illustriously like himself, *i.e.* by so surprising, unthought of methods as the gospel reveals, to recover to himself this glory out of the cloud, and make it shine more brightly than ever, in this final victory over death, and him that had the power of it: so that it shall at last retain no dominion over any, but such as by their own choice, during a new state of trial, remained in an inviolable union with that prince of darkness and death! How glorious will the triumphs of this victory be, over the grand apostate! And how unsupposable is it, that he should have occasion left him to glory in an eternal conquest! And,—

(2.) It is not a light thing to him whose nature is love, that without this final victory the felicity of the redeemed should never be fully accomplished. Antecedently to the gospel revelation, it would seem more agreeable to the nature of God that some should be rescued from the power of death, than that all should lie under it for ever. But we, to whom that revelation is vouchsafed, cannot now but think it the most unlikely thing in the world that the design of Almighty love should finally be defeated; and that such as are in vital union with the Redeemer should either be overcome at last by death, or remain in an eternal struggle with it. Whence nothing can be conceived in this case, but that, as to them, death must be swallowed up in this glorious everlasting victory.

Whereupon how admirable a display will there herein be of

sundry the most known attributes and excellencies of the divine nature, as his wisdom, power, goodness, holiness, justice, and truth, in the whole conduct, and in this final issue of things! as might be distinctly shown of each, if we were not within limits. He at first dealt with them very suitably to their natures, at length he deals with them according to his own; that it may be the theme of eternal contemplation to themselves, and the whole intelligent world, how far his ways are above their ways, and his thoughts above their thoughts. Isa. lv. 8. And that as, at first, he thought it not fit to hinder them from doing as too little became such creatures, nothing should at last hinder him from doing as became a God.

II. But come we now to the use. And,—

1. Do we find this saying, in the sacred word of God, that "death is swallowed up in victory?" Then we are not to doubt, but so it shall be. A plenary assent is to be given to it. But what sort of assent? Not that which arises from the sight of our eye. If that were to be our only informer, we see no such thing; but quite the contrary. That represents death to us as the only conqueror, it visibly swallows up all in victory, wheresoever it makes a seizure. Nothing stands before it! We behold it turning every where living men and women, like ourselves, into breathless lumps of earth! It irresistibly introduces itself, and life is fled and gone! Such as conversed with us, walked to and fro amongst us, reasoned, discoursed with us, managed business, pursued designs, delighted themselves with us and gave us delight, become death's captives before our eyes, are bound in its bands; and we cannot redeem them, nor save ourselves. Where then is this swallowing up of death in victory, which is itself so constantly victorious? Our reason may tell us it shall not be always and universally so; but it flutters, and hallucinates. It is the divine word that must at last put the matter out of doubt; and our faith therein, which is the substance of what we hope for, and the evidence of what we do not see. If faith be to assure our hearts in this matter, it must be as it relies upon his word, who can do this, and hath said he will. If we believe his power, that renders it possible to us; if his word, that makes it certain. Hath he said it? Who then shall gainsay it? It is one of the true and faithful sayings of God.

2. If this be a credible saying, it is certainly a very comfortable one. If we can but make that first step, and perceive this not to be a hard or incredible saying; it is very obvious to make a second, and acknowledge it to be a very consolatory saying: and that both in reference to—the past death of our friends and relatives, even such as were nearest, and most dear to us;—and in reference to our own most certainly future and ex-

pected death. In the one case, and the other, we are to look upon it as a comfortable saying, that this mighty raging enemy shall have all his power lost, and swallowed up in so glorious a victory, one day.

(1.) It is surely a very comfortable saying, in the former of these cases, the case of our losing friends and relations very dear unto us. And there only needs this to make it most deliciously pleasant, *i.e.* to have a comfortable persuasion concerning such that they are part of Christ's seed; they are some of them in reference to whom Christ is, in the most peculiar sense, the first-fruits, so as that they have a pre-assurance of victory in his conquest and victory over death and the grave. And we have great reason to be so persuaded concerning that worthy gentlewoman, whose late decease is the more special occasion of this solemn assembly at this time. She was one who (as such as had most opportunity to observe, and best ability to judge, did reckon) had given abundant evidence of the work of God's saving grace upon her own spirit, and who thereupon did long walk with God in a very continued course; so, indeed, as that though her comforts were observed not to be rapturous, yet they were steady and even, so as that she was rarely troubled with doubts, to give obstruction or hindrance to her in her Christian course. If any such doubt did arise, it soon vanished, and she quickly, through the mercy of God, received satisfaction, and so went cheerfully on in her way. She was abundant in reading, especially of the Holy Book; that was her business and delight. She very little cared to concern herself in reading writings that were merely notional, or polemical and disputative; but the most practical ones she was most of all taken with, such as treated of the other state, and of the duties of Christians in the mean time in reference thereto: future felicity, and present spiritual-mindedness, that has so certain connection therewith, and so direct a tendency thereto, were, with her, the delightful subjects which she chose to read of and meditate upon.

Her temper was observed to be even, betwixt a freeness and reservedness. She was not melancholy, though much inclined to solitariness; and would frequently lament that so much of her precious time was passed away, either in necessary business, or civil conversation that was not to be avoided. It was observed that her disposition was most highly charitable, very apt to give, even to her uttermost, as occasions did occur.

In reference to her children, her care was most tender. Much of her time was spent in instructing them, while under her instruction, and within her reach; teaching them their catechism with the proofs at large, and how to apply the proofs to the answer, so as to bring them to a distinct understanding thereof. And in this way and course she passed through the world. Her

last sickness did very little alter the temper of her spirit; it was calm and sedate all along. Only so much does deserve a remark, that she was prepossessed with an apprehension that she should die suddenly. So much of God's secret he was pleased to impart to her, as he sometimes does to more inward friends; that discovery he vouchsafed to her as to a favourite, to let her have some kind of presignification, that her passage out of this world should be very quick, whensoever it came:—and so it was, that sitting in her chair, amidst familiar discourse, in a dimidiated sentence she made a full stop, and life was ended before that could have an end.

Now certainly the decease of such a one ought not to be lamented with that bitter sorrow, as if there were no such thing as this, that death were certainly to be swallowed up in victory; in an entire and complete victory with reference to such a one. It seems, indeed, in such cases, as was said to you before, unto the judgment of our sense, that death only overcomes, we see not beyond that; it turns a living creature into a dead clod, and so it is laid among such, it is buried in the grave, our sight goes no further. But when we are persuaded, by the word of the Lord, that "this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible, incorruption, and death be swallowed up in such a victory," as you have heard; certainly this takes away the cause of all bitter and reliefless sorrow.

I am not unapprehensive that reverend brother, whom this stroke touches more nearly, is much fitter to administer this consolation, than receive it from such a one as I. But as we may any of us put in for our share, as our case may require and can admit, in what is so generally spoken with reference to Christians dying in the Lord, and their surviving fellow Christians, that as yet live in him, (1 Thess. iv. from *v.* 13, onward to the end;) so, we are directed to comfort one another therewith. Be patient, I pray you, while I present to you this most suitable portion of Scripture, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord: wherefore comfort one another with these words." We shall be in a great promptitude and disposition of

spirit to do so, if these words be looked upon as divine sayings, as the words of the living and immortal God. My friends, do you not find there is spirit in these words? Is there not strong consolation in them? How can we but think so, unless our whole religion be with us but a fable? This concerns us all upon the common Christian account, who are but a residue, a remnant, escaped, and exempted awhile from being part of the spoils and triumphs of death; which hath slaughtered, and thrown into the dust probably a much greater number of our friends and relatives, than we ourselves do make who are left behind. And it is likely we have been most of us divers times mourners upon such occasions. This shows upon what account, and in what case, we may intermingle very reviving consolations with our sorrows, and that we ought freely, as the occasion recurs, to apply it to ourselves and one another.

But I withal think there may be somewhat of more special import, tending to repress intemperate sorrow, on such an occasion, in that of Ezek. xxiv. 16. I think there may be somewhat, I say, collected, besides what was more peculiar and appropriate by way of signal to the prophet himself, that may reach the last mentioned case. It was a thing enjoined upon him, that he should not mourn nor weep, nor should his tears run down, when God should take away from him the desire of his eyes with a stroke. I reckon that, as we have seen, Christians should not mourn like other men; so the Lord's prophets are not to mourn altogether like others of his people, but somewhat more of restraint they are to put upon themselves, that they may discover a higher excellency, or somewhat a greater measure of that spirit of faith ruling in them that gives a great allay to present things, whether good or evil, as it begets clearer and more vivid apprehensions of things yet future and out of sight: and that as all believers should endeavour, in things of common concernment to all, to be exemplary to one another, and to other men; so they who are so much nearer to God, in office and relation, should be examples to believers in conversation, spirit, faith. 1 Tim. iv. 12.

(2) This should be very comfortable too unto them that are in union with Christ, in reference to their own future death, which they are continually to expect. Death is often saying to us repeatedly, and very sensibly, to our very bone and our flesh, you shall be my prey shortly; at least, sooner or later. It is ready to make its seizure upon us, when, we do not know; but we are sure some time it will.

But, my friends, it does not become Christians to look upon this thing, called death, as so formidable a thing, as it is commonly reckoned:—it is ignominious to our profession, not to be endured amongst them that have life and immortality brought

to light, and set in view before their eyes in the gospel; such as profess to be united with Christ, who hath life in himself, and imparts it to all that are so united,—such a life, hid with Christ in God,—and hope, that when he who is their life shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory. It becomes not such to die continually, by the fear of dying, or that the very thoughts of death should be deadly to them.

This is remote from what was much observed to be the temper and character of primitive Christians. A heathen prince,* who thoroughly understood them not, censures them too hardly, as being in the other extreme, (though he at length became kinder to them) as if they rashly threw themselves upon death. Whereas, he says, the soul should rationally and becomingly be in readiness to be loosed from the body, λελογισμένως, καὶ σεμνῶς. But how come we to lose our character, and our glory? How degenerated a thing is the Christianity of our age! To die without regret, is counted an attainment: it should be with gladness, (Ps. xvi. 9—11,) and upon the considerations there mentioned, as being now upon the confines of that world of perfect purity, bliss, and joy; and having so great an assurance, that the intermediate death we are to go through, is no sooner suffered than overcome!

We should deal closely with ourselves in this. Do we think this saying a fable, or a trifle? Have these words no meaning? We should labour to come to a point, and say, If we have no reason to disbelieve them, we will believe them absolutely, and live as having gained our point, and overcome already; *i.e.* who are as sure of victory as of death. Some overcome by dying, as others are overcome by it. There are, who are not hurt by the second death. If death strike once, it thereby puts it out of its own power ever to strike a second time, or hurt them more. Let us once bring our case to that state as to live in continual defiance of death, let it strike when it will. Dependence, only on the grace and Spirit of Christ, must give us this confidence; not an opinion that we are ourselves strong enough to act separately, but that knowing our relation to him, we are, through Him that loved us, more than conquerors; or as that ὑπερνικῶμεν, (Rom. viii. 37,) may be understood to signify, we are a glorious, triumphant sort of conquerors. We not only conquer, but triumph too, "through him that loved us—being persuaded that neither death, nor life—shall separate us from his love:" so a noted expositor understands that word, observing how great a delight this apostle takes, when he would heighten a matter, in the use of that particle ὑπέρ.

It is elsewhere said, (Col. iii. 3,) "Ye are dead, but your life," &c. We are dead, *i.e.* in ourselves; we are a sort of dead or

* Marc. Antonin. de Vit. Suâ, lib. 11.

dying creatures; death hath almost got the possession of us already, has partly seized, and partly sentenced us to die, and irreversibly. This the apostle intimates, where he adds what you have heard; "Ye have a life hid with Christ in God;" that life is safe, and out of the reach of death, no death can touch that life. They that are born of God, have in reference to this life, (though the other must be given up) a self-preserving principle and power in them. 1 John v. 18. They keep themselves, that the evil one touches them not; that is, not mortally, or with any deadly touch. In having a new, holy, divine life, they have an assuring pledge also of the permanency, perpetuity, and everlastingness of it. If a man have once drank of that water which Christ gives, it shall be in him a perpetual fountain, "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." John iv. 14.

Are we Christians, and with the springings of this life do we not feel a lively joy springing and exulting in our hearts? Add vital Christianity to the rational nature, and loathness to die is a repugnancy, and a reproach to both. Christianity so plainly stating our case, reason should judge upon it, and suitable affections arise in us thereupon; as they would if our Christianity were vital, and the product of the divine Spirit. Then, how should we bless God that we are mortal, and that it is not in the power of all this world to keep us from dying out of it, when we know in how glorious a victory that death will be swallowed up! But it may be said by some, "We should very little fear death, if we did know our interest in Christ, if we were not in great uncertainty, and had not our hearts hanging in doubt within us about this thing." And therefore,—

3. This saying should be monitory to us, (as it is a credible, as it is a comfortable, so it is a monitory saying also) "Death shall be swallowed up in victory." This said in reference to some, (which cannot be meant as to all) so great a thing spoken with restriction, ought to make them of whom it is not meant look about them! With what solicitude should we concern ourselves to be at a certainty! Am I one of them, in reference to whom death shall be swallowed up in such a victory? It should awaken us to consider, Have we made our interest sure in our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Prince and Lord of life? "He that hath the Son hath life." It is eternal life that is spoken of in that context, (1 John v. 11, 12,) "This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life; and this life is in his Son;" that is, this eternal life. "He that hath the Son, hath this life; he that hath not the Son, hath not this life." Spiritual life and eternal life are all one, all of a piece, the same in nature and kind; the one will grow up into the other. That life only is here meant that will be eternal life. To the same sense is that, "He that believeth in me, shall never die."

John xi. 26. These are plain words. He hath a life in him that is immortal, sacred, and not liable to be touched. It was before said, "They that believe in him, if dead, shall live;" (*v.* 25.) but not only that, but it is further added, "they that believe in him shall never die."* If dead, they shall live; if they live, they shall never die. What means this? That they have a life, besides this bodily one, which is continued through death. Of this line or thread, death makes no intercision. But we can never justify it to God, or our own understandings, to rest in a dubious uncertainty about a matter of so vast consequence as this. Unconcernedness here is the most unaccountable thing in the whole world; *i. e.* whether we have only that life in us which will end in the darkness and rottenness of a grave, and a horrid hell, or that which runs into eternal life. Things will come to this issue very shortly with us, that either death must, as to us, be "swallowed up in victory," or we be swallowed up of victorious death; nor have we any ways to ascertain our own state, but, as was said, by uniting with the Prince of life; *i. e.* by receiving him in all the capacities wherein we are to be concerned with him, and by resigning ourselves entirely to him. For if we must have him, that we may have life, how can we otherwise have him but by receiving him? The gospel, under which we live, can only be a savour of life to us as it disposes us hereunto. Recollect yourselves then, how do your Lord's days, and other seasons of attending this gospel, pass over with you? Have you long expected life, and (which is less likely) do you meet with continual and total disappointments? And doth it cause with you no qualmish thoughts? But it is infinitely a sadder case, if you never feel yourselves begin to live, and yet are never disappointed, because you never attend upon the gospel dispensation with any such design or hope. Is the matter thus, that if you speak the truth of your case you must say, "I have a soul dead to all the actions, motions, sensations, enjoyments, of a divine and spiritual life?" And shall it be always thus, by our own consent, with any of us? We have, however, the rational, intellectual life, and can think; do we think it is fit for us to rest satisfied and secure in such a state? What, satisfied in the midst of death? such a death? while we are capable of apprehending at once the horror, the danger, and the remediableness of our case? What will this come to? It can only be holy, divine life that must be victorious over death, as the warring, opposite principle: if there be nothing to oppose it, what shall conquer? Death is in that case total; and upon such terms, till life begin to spring in thy soul, thou must reckon it likely to be eternal. Yet let none so mistake as to imagine this life an enthusiastical thing, that must discover itself

* Vid. Ham. in loc.

in rapturous extatical motions, or go for nothing. It perfects our faculties, therefore destroys them not; and chiefly consists in a rational judgment, choice, and love of what is most worthy of us; what is fittest to be done by us, and what is with fullest satisfaction to be enjoyed; with a stedfast, most resolved adherence thereunto.

4. This saying ought to be instructive to us, in reference especially to this one thing, *i. e.* that we abstain from rash censures of providence, that God lets death be *regnant* in so great a part of his creation, so long a time. It shall "be swallowed up in victory;" let that solve with us the phenomenon. It seems, indeed, an untoward one, and might at first be an amazing spectacle even to the blessed angels themselves, to behold so great a revolt in heaven; and afterwards to take notice of an intelligent world of creatures beneath them, successively, through one first delinquent, drawn in as accomplices into a like defection; and death hereby spreading its horrid shadow, and extending its power, over so great and so noble a part of the universe; committing such wastes, making such desolations, from age to age, in so great a part of the creation of God! But there are many alleviating considerations, that should compose our spirits to a rational quietude, and be satisfying and pacifying to our minds with reference to this thing. Let me but name some few to you, which I shall leave with you for this purpose.

(1.) Do but consider how minute a part of the creation of God this globe, this point, this punctilio rather, of our earth is, where death has reigned, and so long had place.

(2.) Consider how much of life there is in, and about, this little world of ours. When upon one single mole-hill you see the brisk motions and efforts of so many hundred lives, you have reason to apprehend there is a great deal of vitality about this little spot of earth.

(3.) Consider and collect how probable it is, that as we go higher and higher, the nobler and finer parts of God's creation must be much more replenished with a nobler and more excellent sort of life. It is very unreasonable to think that this clod of earth should be so full of life, and that in higher and purer regions there should not be a richer plenitude of life, or of such inhabitants as live nobler and more excellent lives than we. And,—

(4.) For aught we know, death never reaches higher than this earth of ours, and what is in a nearer vicinity to it: and that, therefore, there be vast and ample regions, incomparably beyond the range of our eye, or thought, where now no death ever comes; after the detrusion of the first revolters from those bright regions. When we are told, (Eph. iv. 10) our Lord Jesus Christ is "ascended far above all heavens," as it were a fond

attempt to pretend to count them, so it were rash philosophising to go about to describe them. But can we suppose them spacious, wild wastes? or not suppose them replenished with numberless numbers of excellent creatures that, in their confirmed state, fear no death; and continually pay a willing, joyful homage to their great preserver? For "every knee must bow to him, of things in heaven." Phil. ii. 10. And when we are told, (Eph. i. 20, 21,) God hath "set him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name," &c.; and (1 Pet. iii. 22,) that "he is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject to him;" though we cannot form distinct thoughts what those dynasties, principalities, and dominions are, yet we cannot but suppose those unconceivably vast and ample regions fully peopled with immortal inhabitants, that reign in life in a more excellent sense. For it being said, our Lord "ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things," (Eph. iv. 10,) this must suppose suitable recipients. And if his influences reach down in such plenty to our minute earth, (as *v.* 11—13,) how copious are they *here!*

(5.) Consider that here, where death has made its inroad, though the apostate spirits surround us, and encompass this earth of ours, and go to and fro throwing death among us every where; yet even here is a glorious offspring continually arising, the Redeemer's seed, in whom a divine life is gradually springing up from age to age: so that, at length, they make a great multitude which no man can number, standing before the throne, clothed with white robes, and, as ensigns of victory, having palms in their hands. Rev. vii. 9. Here is life then disseminated through all this death that inwraps our world, which, for aught we know, is the centre of death: it may be here, for aught we can tell, and no where else; (here, or hereabouts) and yet even here, a holy divine life is insinuating and spreading itself, even among us over whom death has reigned; and there are great numbers, that having received "abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Rom. v. 17. Here is supposed a kingdom, with a counter kingdom, and one head against another; one that brought in death and condemnation upon the world, but another that brings in righteousness, and life. And that here, even in this lower region, the Redeemer should have so large a portion, (we know not how large) this very much narrows the confines of death. And let it be further considered,—

(6.) That where death shall be perpetual, it is there but self-procured. They only lie under death, that loved it. "All they that hate me, love death." Prov. viii. 36. They inwrap them-

selves in death, they make a covenant with it. That sin, which is death, which carries death and hell in itself, that they loved: it was so, it is true, with the rest, that finally perish not; but it was not always so. The grace of God made a difference, not to be quarrelled at, when, striving with many, it is victorious with some. But of those with whom it is not so, it must be said, as their final, never-altered sense, even to the last, they would not be plucked out of the gulph, that deadly gulph, where they therefore lie as in their most agreeable element. And let it further be considered,—

(7.) That for the death that shall be perpetual, it is to be confined, and go no further. Before, it was diffused, and continually more and more diffusing itself. But in the future state of things, when time has run to its period, and the affairs of it are shut up by the final judgment, death and hell are now to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Rev. xx. 14. All death is now to be gathered into death, hell into hell. It shall be contracted, gathered into itself. It is true, it will be therefore consummate, finished, perfect in its kind, or full of itself, as that which is without mixture cannot but be, (as was noted before) here will be pure death, without mixture, and which therefore will have no allay. But then, whereas formerly it ranged to and fro uncontrolled, now it is confined to its own narrower circle, and can have no new subject; and shall therefore give no further trouble or disturbance to the rest of God's creation. Moreover, consider,—

(8.) That this victory will not be gradual only, but total and entire. Every thing of mortality that was hanging about these glorious victors, shall be swallowed up in perfect, and in endless life. Death is unstung first, disarmed, and then easily overcome. Its sting is said to be sin, the deadliest thing in death. A plain further proof, by the way, the apostle intended death also, in the moral sense. And the insulting inquiry, "Where is it?" implies it is not any where to be found, and signifies a total abolition of it; and, by consequence, must infer that every thing of death besides must, as to them, for ever cease and be no more. Which also the phrase of "swallowing up," doth with great emphasis express. And this completes the vindication of Providence, *i. e.* in this whole affair; and not only vindicates but magnifies the conduct of the supreme Disposer of all things. For by this means, as his wisdom, power and goodness are most highly illustrated; so the trial of his people's faith, the great instrument of this their victory, as well as of that over the world, (1 John v. 4,) is "found unto praise, honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. i. 7;) and they find, what, by patient continuance in well-doing, they were enjoined to

seek, (which shows they were not vainly put upon so noble a pursuit) honour, glory, immortality, to their actual attainment of eternal life. Rom. ii. 7.

Now therefore shall this saying be made good, in its fullest sense; and if there shall be such a victory, so glorious a one, won at last; surely we should be tuning our instruments, and labouring to get our hearts into a frame to sing the ἐπινίκιον, the triumphant song, (*v.* 55, 56, and conclude it, as *v.* 57,) "Thanks be to God, that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

FUNERAL SERMONS

FOR

MINISTERS.

A FUNERAL SERMON,

FOR THAT FAITHFUL AND LABORIOUS SERVANT OF CHRIST,

MR. RICHARD FAIRCLOUGH,

WHO DECEASED JULY 4, 1682, IN THE SIXTY-FIRST YEAR OF HIS AGE.

TO THE REVEREND MR. SAMUEL FAIRCLOUGH, MR. JOHN FAIRCLOUGH, MR. GEORGE JONES, AND MR. RICHARD SHUTE,

WITH THEIR PIOUS CONSORTS,

THE BRETHREN AND SISTERS OF THE DECEASED MR. RICHARD FAIRCLOUGH.

My worthy Friends,

It is, I apprehend, a grievous thing to you to be destitute of the wonted solace you have taken in those your most delectable relatives, the father and the elder brother of a family, whereof you were the genuine or the ingrafted branches. Whether nature or choice gave you your interest, you had a common concern and comfort in it; and, indeed, from a love too little common to the rest of the world. The love that hath so observedly flourished among you, and been your collective, unitive bond, as it hath shown itself to be of a higher than the common kind, demonstrated its own divine original, and that it had its root in heaven; so have its effects been a demonstration what such a love can do for the cherishing of union, not only in a private family, but in the church and family of the living God also: and how little necessary it is unto a union, even there, that there be a sameness of sentiments and practices in every little punctilio; for a disagreement wherein, too many have thought themselves licensed to hate and even destroy one another. As God himself was the fountain, so he was the first object of that love with you. And as your love to him caused your entire devotedness to his interest, so your mutual love united your hearts (according to your several capacities) in serving it; without grudging, or hard thoughts, that each one served it not exactly in the same way. By that love you have been undivided in your joys and sorrows, in reference to one another. While your very eminent father survived, how gladly did you pay a joint rever-

ence and duty to him ! What a glory was his hoary head unto you ! This your worthy brother was the next resort and centre of your united respect and delight. I doubt not you feel your loss as to both, which (though God had made a former breach upon you) the longer continuance, as well as the pleasantness of the enjoyment, cannot but have made the more sensible unto you. We are somewhat apt to plead a prescription for our more continued comforts, but you know how little that avails against a statute, as that (for instance) by which it is appointed that all must die ; nor is it to be regretted that the absolute Lord of all should pluck in pieces our earthly families, for the building and completing his own, in heaven.

What I have said of this your excellent brother, in the close of the following discourse, is but a small part of what you know. It serves for the solace of the survivors, not the advantage of the dead ;* and the solace is real and great, when imitation makes all that is commendable our own, and most intimate to ourselves. It is, otherwise, but a faint comfort to have been related to an excellent person. When a limb is cut off, the soul retires to the remaining parts. May a double portion of the spirit and life, which were so copious and vigorous in the deceased, abound unto you ! And I should be very faulty, if I put not in for some share with you, who must profess myself a great sharer for your affliction and loss ; and

Your very affectionate brother,

And servant in our Lord,

J. H.

* August. de Cur. pro Mort. Gerend.

THE

FAITHFUL SERVANT

APPLAUDED AND REWARDED.

MATT. xxv. 21.

His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

IT may seem somewhat incongruous, and an indecency, that this memorial of our worthy friend, should be now solemnized so long after his very remains are gone from off the face of the earth. But two things concurred to make the delay necessary and unavoidable, *viz.* that his own desire, expressed in his will, limited the performance of this office to the person upon whom it now falls: and that my own great infirmities, before the time of his sickness and death, (which made it more likely he should have done this part for me, than I for him) had obliged me to begin a course, for the repairing of languishing health, which required some weeks' attendance abroad, and which could not be sooner over. But if our business were only to mourn and lament our own, and the more common loss, it were not yet too late. The mention of his name, the worthy Mr. Richard Fairclough, is enough to open fresh springs, calling to remembrance such a brother, such a friend, such a preacher of the word of life, as he was.

And it should do it most of all upon the most common account; whom would it not induce to mourn over this forlorn world, to see that every thing that is more excellent, more pure, more desirable, more capable of being useful in it, God is gathering up out of it? O how much of spirit and life is gone from it, when one such man dies! How are we to mourn over the world as dying gradually the worst sort of death, when the holy, divine life is thus exhaled out of it, and is expiring by degrees! But, come, we have somewhat else to do than mourn;

all this tends to make a glorious heaven; one bright star the more is now added to it; there is nothing of this holy life lost; whatsoever of excellency, purity, goodness, life, loveliness, and love of that divine kind vanishes from among us, is but transferred to its own native place, returns to its proper element, as the forsaken dust hath to its own. Heaven hath its part out of every such person, the seat of all life, purity and goodness; as the earth draws into its bosom its own terrene part, not without a sacredness, and a rich perfume adhering to that also. And as it is not our only or more principal business to mourn; so nor is it to relieve and fortify ourselves against mourning. We have somewhat to do diverse from them both, and that is more considerable than either of them. We are chiefly so to consider his death as may best serve the purposes of our own yet-continuing life; which was the scope of that desire of his, signified by his will, that an instructive sermon might be (upon that occasion) preached to the people. We are to set ourselves to learn from it what doth most concern our own daily practice and hope; so to acquit ourselves as not to neglect the duty of good and faithful servants to our common Lord, nor to come short of their reward.

And to this purpose we are more to consider his life, than his death; the life which he hath lived on earth, and the life which (we have reason not to doubt) he doth live in heaven. Nor could my thoughts reflect upon any portion of Scripture more fit for our purpose, or that was more suitable to him and us, *i. e.* that could more aptly serve to describe him, and instruct ourselves; nor have I known any person to have left the world, within my time, to whom this text of Scripture might more fitly be applied. I shall only observe, and insist upon, these two heads of discourse from it,—the character of such a servant, and—the treatment which he finds at last, from his heavenly Master.

I. His character. He is said to have *done well*, or it is said to him, εὖ, "well," (no more is there in the Greek text,) and then he is further bespoken as a "good and faithful servant;" more generally and particularly, his fidelity is commended in reference to the special trust and charge, which is implied to have been committed to him; "Thou hast been faithful in a few things;" I have not over-charged thee, and thou hast acceptably discharged thyself. Some think this (and the whole parable) to belong only to the ministers of the gospel, the servants of Christ in that special sense. I do not see a reason for that restriction; the words are of themselves capable of being extended further, to the faithful servants of Christ in whatsoever capacity; though being spoken to the disciples, as from the continuation of the discourse, (with this evangelist) from the beginning of the fore-

going chapter may be collected, it seems not unfit to allow them a more particular reference to their special office and trust. And here we must note, that these words of commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant," do speak both the *truth* of the thing, and the *judgment and estimate* which his Lord makes thereof accordingly. We are now to consider them under the former notion, as they express the *truth* of the thing—the mattter of fact, whereof we cannot have a more certain account than (as here we have it) from his mouth, who employed him, was his constant Supervisor, must be his final Judge, and will be his bountiful Rewarder at length. We shall here, in opening his character, note—some things leading and introductive, or that belong to his entrance into this service: and—some things that belong to his performance, afterward.

First. For the introductive, supposed part of his character. He is—

1. One that hath disclaimed all former and other masters, all in co-ordination, for of such no man can serve two: other lords had dominion over him, but by their usurpation, and his unjust consent, who was not his own, and had no right to dispose of himself. The faithful servant repents, and retracts those former engagements as bonds of iniquity, by which he will be no longer held, renounces any former inconsistent master or service. A truly subordinate master he must own, for the same reason upon which he acknowledges the supreme; and do all that such derived authority challenges, by his direction who gave it: otherwise, he hath learned to call no man master on earth.

2. He is one that hath, by covenant, surrendered and resigned himself to this great Lord, and his service. Some relations have their foundation in nature, this of servants to a master, (we except slaves) in their consent, or in mutual contract. And though this general relation between God and man have the most deeply natural foundation imaginable, whereupon all are his servants; yet the special relation must have the other ground, *viz.* that of consent, or contract superadded: not to give God a right to our service, but more expressly and effectually to oblige ourselves to it, and that we may have a right to his rewards. It is but acknowledging and recognizing his former right in us, which is part (and the initial part) of our duty to him. He requires and justly insists upon it, to be acknowledged as our only rightful Lord; which till we do, we are in rebellion against him, and in the condition of servants broken away from their masters, runaways, fugitives, and who keep ourselves out of the family; and though that cannot however destroy his right, yet it is inconsistent with our *duty*, for our service must be throughout voluntary; and with our *reward*, for nothing that is not voluntary, is rewardable. Therefore the good and faithful

servant, in the text, is one that affects and chooses the state, first, and says with the Psalmist, (Ps. cxix. 38,)—"Thy servant who is devoted to thy fear." And (Ps. cxvi. 16,) "O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, the son of thy handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds." He doth as is required, (Rom. vi. 13, 19,) yields himself to God, and all his parts and powers servants of righteousness unto holiness. He reckons it neither dutiful towards God, nor comfortable to himself, to do him only occasional service, but *ad libitum*, and as an unrelated person. He thinks it not honourable to the great Lord of heaven and earth, but to borrow (as it were) another's servant, nor can he satisfy himself not to be of the family; therefore he consents first to the relation, and enters himself his covenant-servant. Faithfulness supposes having covenanted, and hath the same reference to our part of the covenant, that God's faithfulness hath to his.

3. He is one that hath thereupon made it his earnest study to know his Lord's will. His first inquiry is, "What wilt thou have me to do, Lord?" He is solicitous to understand the duty of his station, (Ps. cxix. 125,) "I am thy servant, give me understanding that I may know thy testimonies." To enter one's self the servant of another, without any concern to know the business of his place, shows an insincere mind, and argues he hath more a design to serve himself upon his master, than to serve him.

4. He is one that hath an inclination to the work he is to do, when he knows it, a *προθυμία*, an inclining bent of mind to it; that which the Scripture means by having the law of God written in the heart, spoken of our Lord himself, in reference to that peculiar service he was to perform; "Lo! I come to do thy will, O God; thy law is in my heart." Ps. xl. 8. Who, though he were a Son, yet taking the form of a servant, applied himself to that severe part assigned to him, with a most willing mind; and had, hereupon, the highest approbation imaginable, (Isa. xlii. 1,) "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." And it is spoken of all the inferior true servants of God besides, (Jer. xxxi. 33,) "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." It is the same thing with being God's workmanship, (Ephes. ii. 10,) created unto good works; and with that readiness to every good work, *ἑτοίμους εἶναι*. Titus. iii. 1. If a man's heart be not so framed to God's service, how awkwardly and untowardly does he go about any thing that is enjoined him; he is habitually disobedient, and to every good work reprobate. Titus i. 14.

Secondly. And, for that part of the character which being a good and faithful servant *includes*,—

1. He is one that endeavours to extend his obedience to the

whole compass of his duty, hath a universal respect to all God's commandments, is not partial in the law.

2. He peculiarly minds the work most of his own station: thinks it not enough, or possible, to be a good Christian, and at the same time an ill magistrate, minister, parent, master of a family, or servant in it, if it be his lot to be in any of these capacities.

3. He is diligent in all the service that belongs to him, any way; "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Rom. xii. 11.

4. He is, with most delight, exercised in the most spiritual part of his work: in the great, vital acts of faith, love, self-devoting; and those most immediately proceeding from them, meditation, prayer and praise.

5. He balks not the most hazardous, or more costly part: thinks it mean to serve God at no expense, or with what costs him nothing: measures not his duty by the advantage or safety of his own secular interest; so as to decline it when nothing is to be got by it, or if any thing be in danger to be lost.

6. He grudges not that others are less exposed to danger, in their work, than he; and have that liberty of serving God, which he hath not. Let me seriously recommend this property and disposition of a faithful servant, to my brethren in the ministry. While some have opportunity of serving our great and common Lord, without fear of the interruption and suffering to which we are liable, and when we have reason to judge they do it with sincerity, (though we may think they gained their greater liberty by their mistake) there can be no more genuine expression of our fidelity, and sincere devotedness to our Master's interest, than to behold, with complacency, all the good which we observe done by them. If the great apostle rejoiced, and declared he would rejoice that Christ was preached, though not sincerely; (and whether in pretence, or truth) much more should we, when we ought to judge that he is sincerely preached. And if he envied not those that preached Christ, even of envy, how horrid would it be, should we behold with envy what we are to suppose done out of love and good-will! They are great admirers of themselves, and lovers of some interest of their own more than his, that cannot endure to see his work done by other hands than theirs; or that have nothing of that disposition in them which those words express, "Let him increase, and me decrease."

7. He is much less apt to smite his fellow servants, or hinder them in their work, unless they will work by his rule and measure, unprescribed by their Lord himself. He takes no pleasure to see the hands tied up of useful labourers in the harvest, wishes not their number diminished; but, because the harvest is really

plenteous, but the labourers are few, rather prays the Lord of the harvest to "send forth labourers into his harvest." Matt. ix. 37, 38.

If any, of their own private inclination, would have the necessary work of their Lord hindered, and take pleasure in the exclusion of industrious labourers, for their conscientious disuse of things, by their own confession, not necessary; good Lord! what spirit are they of? I understand it not, nor let my soul enter into their secret! I had rather a thousandfold bear their anger, than be of their spirit! Would any faithful servant rather wish his master's work should be in any part undone, than done by those he dislikes; upon no more important reason than that their clothes, perhaps, are not of the same colour with his?

But thanks be to God, that among those that differ from each other in the lesser things, there are so many that rejoice, being under restraints themselves, for the liberty of others; and that mourn, while they enjoy themselves an ample liberty, for others' restraints; and among whom there is no other contention, but who shall think, and speak, and act with most kindness towards one another: and, that not whole parties, but an ill mind and spirit only in some persons, can be charged with what so much unbecomes faithful fellow-servants.

8. He is less at leisure to mind what others do, or do not, than what he is to do himself: is above all things solicitous to "prove his own work, that he may have rejoicing in himself, and not in another." Gal. vi. 4.

9. He esteems the utmost he can do but little, and counts, when he hath done his best, he is an unprofitable servant.

10. He approves himself, in all that he doth, to the eye of his great Master. Here we cannot serve too much with eye-service, or be too apprehensive of the constant inspection of our heavenly Lord. One may be too much a pleaser of men, but no man can too much study to please and approve himself to the eye of God.

11. He laments lost time, and labours to redeem it.

12. He greatly rejoices in the success of his work. If, for instance, it be his business to bring home souls to God, nothing is more grateful to him than to prosper in it. "My beloved, my joy, and my crown." Phil. iv. 1. So he counts such as he can make proselytes to Christ,—"I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children walk in truth." 3 John 4. It is said of Barnabas, (a great number believing, and turning to the Lord, Acts xi. 22, 23,) that, "when he saw the grace of God, he was glad; for (it is added) he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost."

13. He loves his work, and his Master; is willing to have his ear bored, and serve him for ever. If any thought arises of

changing, he presently represses it, by some seasonable check and counter-thought,* and confirms his resolution of cleaving to him unto the end.

14. He puts the highest value upon such present encouragements, from his Lord, as are most expressive of peculiar favour. The blessed God knows what is most suitable to the genius and spirit of his own new creature. They who are his sincere servants, are his sons too, born of him; and to the divine and heavenly nature in them those things are most agreeable that are most spiritual, and whereof others, of terrene minds, no more know the value, than that dunghill creature did of the gem it found there; they must have great stores of corn, wine, and oil. His better-born servants are of a more excellent spirit, and better pleased with the light of his countenance; he differently treats them accordingly. As that victorious Persian monarch, (Cyrus,) entertaining at a feast the principal men of his army, gave among them costly gifts; but for *Chryssantus*,† a more peculiar favourite, (ἐφίλησε προσαγαγόμενος) he only drew him near to him, and gave him a kiss; which was intended by the one, received by the other, and envied by a third,‡ as an expression of more special kindness. And of the divine love, which that borrowed expression signifies, pious souls upon all occasions show their highest value. Cant. i. 2.

15. He trusts his master for his final reward, and is content to wait for it, as long as he thinks fit to defer. Paul professes himself a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, in hope of eternal life, which He that could not lie had promised; and hereupon resolvedly encounters all the difficulties of that hazardous service.

II. The acceptance, and reward which such a servant finds above. His acceptance is expressed in the same words, (as was said) which have generally given us his character; not only showing what he was and did, but that his Lord esteemed, and passes an approving judgment of him, (as it was not to be doubted he would) accordingly. Concerning this judgment we are to note, both what it *supposes*, and what it *includes*.

First. It supposes both an account taken how this servant demeaned himself, and a rule according whereto the matters to be accounted for were to be examined and judged of.

1. That our Lord calls his servants to an account, so we find it expressly said, (*v.* 19,) "After a long time, the lord of those

* As holy Mr. Herbert:—

". . . . Well, I will change the service, and go seek
Some other master out.
Ah, my dear God! though I be clean forgot,
Let me not love thee, if I love thee not."

† Xen. de Pæd. Cyr.

‡ Artabazus, who had a golden cup given him at the same time.

servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." And here it is implied, when he says, "Well done,"—it implies he takes cognizance, and inquires whether they have done well or ill; he is not indifferent or regardless how they quit and behave themselves; nor doth he pronounce rashly and at random without searching into the matter. "So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." Rom. xiv. 12.

2. That there is some certain stated rule, by which their doings must be measured. Well-doing stands in conformity to some rule or other, and what is the next and most immediate rule of duty, is also the rule of God's judgment; such a rule it must suppose, as according whereto a true judgment is possible of our having done well. That cannot be the law of works, according whereto no flesh can be justified in his sight; it must therefore be the law of grace: and so this servant is only said to have done well, according to the ἐπιείκεια *evangelica.* The *indulgence of the gospel* can say εὖ, "it is well," to that which the rigour of the law would condemn. *Bonum oritur ex causis integris, &c.* "well-doing arises out of the concurrence of all requisites; evil from any, the least defect;" and so indeed whatever the rule be, all things must concur that are requisite to acceptance by that rule. But here, simply, every thing of duty is requisite, so that the condition of acceptance and life was not to be distinguished (as a thing of less latitude) from mere duty, in its utmost extent, (Jam. ii. 10:) "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them." Gal. iii. 10.

Secondly. This judgment includes—

1. Well-pleasedness, εὖ, "it is well," *q. d.* I like well thy way and work, it pleases and is grateful to me, and so art thou.

2. An acknowledgment of his title to the designed reward, according to the gospel constitution. It is said to be well, not only according to the absolute and abstract consideration of what was done, but according to its relative consideration and prospect to what was to ensue; and therefore follows, in the subjoined words, the collation of the reward, of which reward we have here a twofold expression: "I will make thee ruler over many things—enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

(1.) "I will make thee ruler over many things." In the evangelist Luke's account of this parable, (if his account refer to the same thing, as spoken at the same time, which some of old, upon the manifold diversity, have doubted; how reasonably I shall not here dispute) it is said, "Have thou authority over so many cities." Either expression represents the remuneration here vouchsafed by a metaphor which nearly approaches that very usual one, by which the felicity of saints is represented under

the notion of a kingdom, *q.d.* thou shalt have an honourable prefecture, be a glorious viceroy, shalt, according to thy capacity, share with me in the dignity of my royal state. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." 2 Tim. ii. 12. This I pass, and shall stay a little more upon the other expression, which is plainer, and without a metaphor.

(2.) "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Wherein, as expositors observe, our Lord slides insensibly out of the parable, into the thing designed by it; using words indifferently applicable to either, but such as wherein he might be easily understood ultimately to mean the joys and glories of the other world or state: expressions serving to signify, as an ancient speaks, *τὴν πᾶσαν μακαριότητα*, "the sum of all felicity," as what can more fitly signify that, than joy, the joy of his Lord, and whereinto he was to enter? Let us consider these severally, though but briefly.

First. Joy, *q.d.* The laborious part is over with thee, now follows thy rest and reward: *joy*, the very notion whereof is rest, *quies appetitus appetibilis*,* (as it is aptly defined) "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy." When the dark shady vale is past over, with much toil, the path of life leads into that "presence where is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore." Ps. xvi. 11. The fulness of joy speaks the purity of it, that is pure which is *plenum sui*, &c. "full of itself," and without mixture of any thing else, which hath so entirely all degrees of itself as not to admit the least degree of its contrary; such is this, it is joy, and no sorrow with it, perfect and most complete joy. This cannot, therefore, be meant of a slight and momentary act, but a perfect and permanent state of joy; which state is made up by the continual concurrence of a twofold, everlasting perfection, *viz.* objective and subjective. *Objective.* That there be a perfect and never-failing good to be enjoyed; and—*Subjective.* That there be a perfect and immutable contemperation, or a thorough undecaying disposition of the subject to the enjoyment of it. From these two cannot but result a most permanent, everlasting state of joy. And of the concurrence of these two, the holy Scripture sufficiently assures us, when it makes God himself to be the object of our eternal vision, in that other state; and tells us that in order thereto, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is:" signifying all that proportion and agreeableness of the blessed soul to the beatific object, which is requisite to a most pleasant, perfect, and perpetual enjoyment.

Secondly. This joy is more expressly specified, by being called "the joy of our Lord;" which signifies it to be not only, —the joy whereof he is the *object*, a joy to be taken in him, (as before) but also,—whereof he is the *Author;* as he now puts

* Chrysost. in loc.

gladness into the heart, (Ps. iv.) in this our imperfect state, he is not less the Author of our most perfect joy: and also, that, whereof he is the *possessor, q.d.* enter into that joy that is now to be common to me and thee, and wherein thou shalt partake with me. So one glosses the words:* "Be thou partaker of the same joy with thy Lord, enjoy thou the same joy that thy Lord enjoys." Amazing thought! yet so Scripture speaks; "Where I am, there also shall my servant be." John xii. 26. "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." And, (*v.* 24,) "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." And that beholding cannot mean a merely contemplative, but a fruitive intuition. "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together," (συνδοξασθῶμεν,) Rom. viii. 17. Other joys are in comparison mean and sordid, this is the highest and most excellent, for it is the divine joy.

Thirdly. It is that they are to enter into, which notes both the plenitude of their right—their Lord bids them enter; and the plenitude of this joy itself—they are to enter into it; and the dominion it must for ever have over them, they are to be absorpt of it, lose themselves in it, not so much to possess it, as be possessed by it. And the perpetuity is intimated of that possession; we are told of their entrance into it, nothing of their passing out of it any more; the last thing we hear of them is, that they are gone into joy.

Now let us see what brief useful reflections are to be made upon all this. And,—

1. How blessed a thing is it to be a faithful servant of Christ! If any have not yet learned to value his service for itself, let them make their estimate by the end of it, and by what is even at present most certainly annexed to it. To be accepted with him! To appear gracious in his eyes! An *euge* from such a mouth! Where the word of a king is, there is power. How joyful a sound do these words carry from the mouth of God, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" The Persic version (as it is rendered) most significantly paraphrases this passage: *Dominus pecuniæ illum blandè excepit, et cordi verba grata dedit: Euge, inquit, O bone et fidelis serve,* &c. "The owner of the money received him pleasantly, and uttered words to him grateful to his heart, saying, Well done, O thou good and faithful servant," &c. What can be more grateful and reviving to the heart of a good man, than that the glorious Lord of heaven and earth should say to him, "Well done!" to have him say to us as to Moses, "Thou hast found grace in my sight," (Exod. xxxiii.

* Esto particeps, &c. Luc. Brugens. in loc.

12;) to have gained this testimony, as Enoch did, (Heb. xi. 5,) that we have "pleased God;" and that our case might truly admit of such an angelic salutation, (though upon a less peculiar account) "Hail, thou that art highly favoured;" how great a thing is it! So great a thing, in the apostle's account, that living, or dying, being in the body, or out of the body, seemed little things to him, in comparison of it: he was willing rather to be absent, but is more solicitous, whether present or absent, that he might "be accepted of him." 2 Cor. v. 8, 9. Yea, and the more abject spirit of a very Cain resents so deeply his not being accepted, that his troubled mind imprints characters of sorrow in his face, shows itself in a fallen countenance and dejected looks.

What ingenuous mind but knows how to value, even the (unprofitable) kindness of a mean friend? Can the love of a God seem little with us? It adds greatly to the value of mere kindness, abstracted from beneficence, if it be borne me by a judicious, wise person; such a one honours whom he loves; we less esteem the love of a fool. There can be no greater contempt of God, than to make light of being accepted with him. But how transporting a thing should it be, besides the present sense of such acceptance, which (with more or less expressness) accompanies diligence and fidelity in his service, to have it judicially declared with solemnity, and publicly said to us before angels and men, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" when so great consequences depend, and are to ensue upon it, as that it should be further said, "Come, be thou ruler over many things, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, enter into the joy of your Lord." Who would think meanly of being the accepted servant of the most high God? They that finally despise so privileged a state, will see it with their eyes, (exemplified in others) but shall never taste the sweetness of it.

2. How easily accountable is it why our Lord lets his servants suffer hard things in this world awhile! He may permit it to be so, who hath it in his power to make their sorrow be turned into joy. It is not strange if weeping endure with them for a night, unto whom such joy is coming in the morning; it is unworthy to repine in this case. It is want of foresight that makes any wonder and censure. Consider well those weighty words, (1 Pet. iv. 12, 13,) "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

3. How wicked and foolish a thing is it to refuse this service! It is horridly unjust towards our most rightful Lord, and most

imprudent for ourselves. Do men know what they do in this? whose right they invade and resist? and what cruelty they use towards their own souls?

4. How much to be lamented is the condition of the sinful world, who so generally decline this service, and make themselves slaves, in the mean time, to the worst of masters! How do men drudge to the devil! What slaves are they to themselves and their own vile lusts!—as, indeed, no man serves himself, but hath a mad fool and a tyrant (as one well says) for his master. We do not enough live up to the principles of our religion, while we consider not, with more compassion, the condition of infatuated mankind in this respect.

5. What may be expected by unfaithful, negligent servants that hide their talent in a napkin. The others' joys serve to measure their sorrows. What a killing word will it be, when, instead of "Well done, good and faithful servant," it shall be said, "Thou wicked and slothful servant!" and instead of, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," they must hear and feel, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." *v.* 30.

6. See what estimate we are to make of the nature of God, especially of his large, munificent goodness; (which is his nature, "God is love;") for consider the various emanations and discoveries of it, which may here be taken notice of.

(1.) That he should seek to have any for servants (which the text supposeth that he doth) in this world of ours; a world of apostate, degenerous, impure, impotent creatures, disaffected to him and his government, hating him, and (as in themselves they are) hateful to him. He who hath so little need of servants for any real use; who can do all things with a word; and if he thought it fit to have them for state, and as a thing becoming his majesty and greatness, is attended above by so excellent, Godlike creatures; so suitable and obsequious; so powerful and agile; those ministers of his that do his pleasure, hearkening to the voice of his word; a world of ministering spirits, that might be used for purposes less kind to us than they are: that he should seek servants among us! (for his having them implies it; who ever served him unsought unto?) invite men into his service, with so importunate solicitation; whom he might despise for their vileness, and destroy for their rebellion, which he can in a moment! And that he should seek such to become his servants, not with indifferency, but with so great earnestness; and use afterwards so various endeavours to retain them in his service! When they gradually decline, that he so graciously upholds them; when ready to break faith with him, and quit his service, that by so apt methods he confirms them; when they actually wander and turn vagabonds, that he should

be so intent to reduce them;—how admirable is all this! View the whole case at once. They neglect his first invitations, he repeats and inculcates them; they faint, he encourages and supports them; they revolt, he follows to bring them back;—the cause of our admiration still rises higher and higher. How much is it, in this last instance, above all human measures! Most men would disdain so to sue to servants that forsake them, and are loath to confess their real need and want of them, (were it never so great;) the Cynic [*Sen.*] scorned to look after his servant that left him, counting it a disgrace, when Manes thought he could live without Diogenes, that Diogenes should not be able to live without Manes. The all-sufficient Deity stoops to that, which indigency and wretchedness think even too mean for them!

(2.) Consider the frankness of his acceptance, even of the least. For how many omissions, how much laziness and sloth, how many incogitancies and mistakes, how much real disservice must he forgive, when he accepts them, and says (yet) it is well done! How little is it they do at the best! And how unprofitable to him! And yet that little also he forms and even creates them to, and continually succours, and assists them in it, works in them to will and to do, otherwise nothing at all would be done; and how full, how complacential his acceptance is!

(3.) Consider the largeness and bounty of his rewards, too large for our expression or conception: so that we even say most to it, when (even lost in wonder) we only admire, and say nothing.

(4.) Consider the kind of the service which he thus bespeaks, accepts, and rewards. The best and most acceptable service any are capable of doing him, is, when they accept him, take and choose him to be their portion and blessedness; trust, love and delight in him as such, live upon his fulness, and (according to their several stations) persuade as many as they can to do so too. They that, in the most peculiar sense, are his ministers or servants, as they are more earnestly intent upon this, and win more souls, are the more amply and gloriously rewarded. They that turn many to righteousness, shine as stars. And for all the rest of his servants, wherein do they serve him most, but when, by their converse and example, they induce others to entertain good thoughts of God and religion, and thereupon to make the same choice which they have made, and become seriously religious; which is most certainly connected with their being happy, and indeed, in greatest part, their very happiness itself: and when they relieve, support, encourage, and help on those that are in the way, or whom they are endeavouring to bring into the way to final blessedness? We as much need our servants, as

they can us; they are our living, reasonable, but most necessary instruments. The whole universe of created beings subsists by mutual dependencies, the uncreated Being without any. Creatures are made to need one another; infinite self-fulness, not capable of receiving additions, is most highly gratified by our cheerful reception of its communications.

Let us learn now to conceive of God answerably to all this; we do him not right, that we consider not his admirable goodness, in so plain instances of it, with more frequent seriousness and intention of mind and spirit, and show ourselves stupid, unapprehensive creatures. Have we a thinking faculty about us, a power to use thoughts? And can we use it upon any thing more evident, more considerable, or that more concerns us? Or do we never use it less pertinently?

7. How unreasonable is it, either to quit the service of our blessed Lord, or to serve him dejectedly! Quit it? Who hath more right in us? Or where will we mend ourselves? O the treacherous folly of apostacy! and how severely is it wont to be animadverted on! 2 Chron. xii. 1. It is said, Rehoboam forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him; and what followed? Shishak, the king of Egypt, comes against them with a great power, and God sends them this message, by Shemaiah the prophet; that "because they had forsaken him, (*v.* 5,) therefore he had left them in the hands of Shishak:" and afterwards, that though upon their humbling themselves, he would not quite destroy them, but grant them some deliverance; yet he adds, "Nevertheless ye shall be his (that is, Shishak's) servants, that ye may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries." *v.* 8. Since they would abandon God, and the true religion, he would by a very sensible instruction, and costly experience, teach them to distinguish and understand the difference, and make them know when they had a good master. And if we serve him despondingly and with dejected spirits, how causeless a reproach do we cast upon him and his service! It is a greater iniquity than is commonly considered, implies dislike of his work, and the rules and orders of the family, impatiency of the restraints of it, distrust of his power to protect, or bounty to reward us; and we may expect it to be resented accordingly. So we sometimes find it hath been, (Deut. xxviii. 47, 48) "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God, with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things, and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee."

8. How are we concerned to follow the example, and expect the acceptance and reward of any such faithful servant of Christ!

And that we may imitate such a good and faithful servant, let me briefly set the example of such a one before you, in this excellent person lately taken from among us; which were it possible to represent entirely, were one of the fairest copies to write after, that this, or perhaps many former ages could afford us. That indeed, which it is fit should first be noted of him, is least of all imitable; I mean his natural temper, (with its more immediate dependencies) which no man can have the privilege to choose. His indeed was one of the happiest that I ever knew, and did so set off all that was superadded and inserted into it, by human culture or divine grace, as an advantageous setting doth the lustre of a diamond. He had all the advantages of education from his childhood, which the pious care of an affectionate, prudent, learned father could give him, that were proper, and preparatory to the function he was intended for; *viz.* that of the sacred ministry: an office whereof his excellent father, (the eminent, holy, heavenly, reverend, ancient, Mr. Fairclough, of Suffolk, whose name in that country hath still a grateful savour with all good men, of whatsoever persuasion) showed his high esteem and love, not only by the most diligent discharge of it himself, but by dedicating all his sons (which were four in number) to it; and giving his two daughters in marriage to such also; so that he was the father of a sacred tribe, an offspring and race of ministers, or that (even naturally) united with such. This was the eldest of his children, and of whose education the first care was to be taken. Scarce any mind could be more receptive of the proper impressions from an ingenuous institution. About twelve years he continued student, (whereof divers, a fellow) and great ornament of Emanuel College, in Cambridge, as he was also much adorned by it. He went from it furnished with such a stock of rational, substantial, as well as polite literature, that showed him to have been no loiterer there. He was a man of a clear, distinct understanding, of a very quick, discerning and penetrating judgment, that would, on a sudden, (as I have sometimes observed in discourse with him) strike through knotty difficulties, into the inward centre of truth, with such a felicity, that things seemed to offer themselves to him, which are wont to cost others a troublesome search. Nor were his notions merely book-learned, borrowed from systems, and taken on trust, but formed by a due (but more speedy) comparing of things; as if truth were more a kin, and connatural to him than to most others, sooner digested, made his own, and inwrought into the temper and habit of his mind: which afterwards, he liked not to muddy and discompose by busy agitations with others, about that truth which he found himself in a pleasant, secure possession of; nor to contend concerning that which he had not found it necessary to contend

for. He declined controversy, not from inability, but dislike; for as he less needed it for a further good end, so he was most remote from loving it for itself; he was satisfied to have attained his end, and was better pleased to know, than to seem to others that he knew. He was of curious sublime fancy, and a lofty style both in speaking and writing, even in his most familiar letters; though he industriously depressed it, in his popular sermons, and other negotiations with those of meaner capacity.

But his moral, and holy excellencies were his chief lustre, being in themselves of a more excellent kind, and shining in him in a very eminent degree. The bent of his soul was towards God; I never knew any man under the more constant governing power of religion, which made it be his business both to exercise and diffuse it to his uttermost; he was a mighty lover of God and men, and being of a lively, active spirit, that love was his facile, potent mover to the doing even of all the good that could be thought (in an ordinary way) possible to him, and more than was possible to most other men. To give a true succinct account of the complexion of his soul, he was even made up of life and love. Such was the clearness and sincerity of his spirit, his constant uprightness and integrity, so little darkened by an evil conscience, (and indeed, little over-clouded with melancholy fumes) that he seemed to live in the constant sense of God's favour and acceptance, and had nothing to do but to serve him with his might; whence his spirit was formed to an habitual cheerfulness, and seemed to feel within itself a continual calm. So undisturbed a serenity hath, to my observation, rarely been discernible in any man; nor was his a dull, sluggish peace, but vital and joyous; seldom hath that been more exemplified in any man, (Rom. viii. 6,) "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." Seldom have any lived more under the government of that kingdom, which stands in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. xiv. 17. His reverence of the Divine Majesty was most profound, his thoughts of God high and great, that seemed totally to have composed him to adoration, and even made him live a worshipping life: he was not wont to speak to God, or of him at a vulgar rate; he was most absolutely resigned and given up to him; devotedness to his interest, acquiescence in his wisdom and will, were not mere precepts with him, but habits. No man could be more deeply concerned about the affairs of religion, and God's interest in the world; yet his solicitude was tempered with that stedfast trust, that it might be seen the acknowledged verities of God's governing the world, superintending and ordering all human affairs by wise and steady counsel and almighty power, which in most others are but faint notions, were with him turned into living sense, and vital principles which governed his soul! Whereupon his great reverence of the majesty of

God, falling into a conjunction with an assured trust, and sense of his love and goodness, made that rare and happy temperament with him, which I cannot better express than by a pleasant seriousness. What friend of his did ever, at the first congress, see his face but with a grave smile? When unexpectedly and by surprise he came in among his familiar friends, it seemed as if he had blest the room, as if a new soul or some good genius, were come among them.

I need not tell them that survive, who were nearest to him, how pleasant a relative he was, nor doth any man need to tell me how pleasant a friend! No man ever more understood, than he, the ingenuities and delights of friendship, especially the high pleasure of gratifying and obliging another; the relishes whereof were so delicious to him, that no festival could be so grateful to any man as the opportunity was to him of making another taste and feel his kindness. Nor did I ever observe any thing so like a frequent fault in him, as an aptness to overvalue his friend. He was a man of most punctual, scrupulous fidelity; his word was ever with him so strictly sacred, that, in the smallest matters, his appointments, though numerous, were through his great prudence so sure, that one might, without the intervenience of extraordinary providence, as certainly expect them, as the returns of day and night: so that they who knew him, though most delighted with his society, were never wont to urge for his stay with them, beyond his prefixed time, (which he commonly mentioned at his first entrance) knowing it would be in vain.

He was of a large and great soul, comprehensive of the interests of God, the world, the church, his country, his friends, and (with a peculiar concernedness) of the souls of men, ready to his uttermost to serve them all; made up of compassion towards the distressed, of delight in the good, and of general benignity towards all men. He had a soul, a life, a name, darkened with no cloud but that of his own great humility, which clouded him only to himself, but beautified and brightened him in the eyes of all others; a humility that allowed no place with him to any aspiring design, or high thought, that could ever be perceived by word, look, or gesture; except the high thoughts and designs which neither ought to be excluded, nor repressed. His greatest ambition was to do good, and partake it in the highest and the best kind of it; to make the nearest approaches he could to the pattern and fountain of all goodness. And now, looking upon so qualified a person, as engaged by office in a peculiar sort of service to Christ, to gather and draw in souls to him, and prepare them for a blessed eternity; how great things may we expect! What do we not find? Mells in Somersetshire was his first, and only (public) station. Thither he was brought, by so peculiar a conduct and direction of Providence, as seemed to

carry with it some signification what great use he was afterwards to be of in that place. The very reverend Dr. Whichcot, being also at that time fellow of the same college in Cambridge, and presented to a living in that country, that was in the disposition of that college, obtained of him to accompany him in a journey to visit, and make some trial of, the people he had been designed to take the charge of: where that so accomplished person expressed a resolution fit to be exemplary to others of profoundest learning, (and which was strictly afterwards followed by this his chosen companion) preaching his first sermon, (as himself was pleased to tell me) upon those words; "I determined to know nothing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." After some time spent together here, the doctor's affairs recalling him for the present to Cambridge; he prevailed with our worthy friend to stay behind, and supply his absence among his people.

What follows, I was informed of by another hand, but one so nearly related to this our dear deceased friend, and so well acquainted with the more desirable occurrences of his life, as not to leave me in doubt concerning so momentous a thing, as how he came to be settled in a country so remote from his own, and where he was so mere a stranger. And it fell out thus:—During his abode upon this occasion, in those parts, a noted gentleman, the patron of the rectory of Mells, being at that time high sheriff of the county, sent to Mr. Fairclough, (of whose worth, fame had not let him long be ignorant) desiring him to preach the assize sermon; some circumstances having also brought the matter within so narrow a compass, that the straits of time made it necessary to press the request with more importunity than could admit of a denial. That performance was so highly acceptable, and so newly over, when the patron was surprised with the tidings of the death of the former rector of Mells, that he immediately told our worthy friend, he could not otherwise so fitly gratify him for his sermon, as by conferring upon him such a living, which, if he pleased to accept it, was his.

The opportunity of stated service, in a calling to which he had most seriously devoted himself, more than the emolument, (as did afterwards sufficiently appear) soon determined his thoughts, and fixed him in this station. There he shone many years a bright and a lively light, a burning as well as shining one; it was soon observed what a star was risen in that horizon, and a confluence was quickly gathered of such as rejoiced in the light of it, which made an obscure country village soon become a most noted place; from sundry miles about thither was the great resort; so that I have wondered to see so thronged an auditory as I have sometimes had the opportunity to observe in such a place, that did usually attend his most fruitful ministry. And

O how hath that congregation been wont to melt under his holy fervours! His prayers, sermons, and other ministerial performances had that strange pungency, quickness, and authority with them, at sometimes; that softness, gentleness, sweetness, alluringness at others; that one would think it scarce possible to resist the spirit and power wherewith he spake. And the effect did in a blessed measure correspond; they became a much enlightened, knowing, judicious, convinced, reformed, even somewhat generally, and in good part a seriously religious, people. His labours here were almost incredible. Besides his usual exercises on the Lord's day, of praying, reading the Scriptures, preaching, catechising, administering the sacraments (as the occasions or stated seasons occurred,) he usually five days in the week, betimes in the morning, appeared in public, prayed, and preached an expository lecture upon some portion of the holy Scriptures, in course, to such as could then assemble, which so many did, that he always had a considerable congregation; nor did he ever produce in public any thing which did not smell of the lamp. And I know that the most eminent for quality and judgment, among his hearers, valued those his morning exercises for elaborateness, accuracy, instructiveness, equally with his Lord's-days sermons. Yet also he found time, not only to visit the sick, (which opportunities he caught at with great eagerness) but also, in a continual course, all the families within his charge: and personally, and severally to converse with every one that was capable, labouring to understand the present state of their souls, and applying himself to them in instructions, reproofs, admonitions, exhortations, and encouragements suitably thereto: and he went through all with the greatest facility and pleasure imaginable; his whole heart was in his work. Every day, for many years together, he used to be up by three in the morning, or sooner; and to be with God, (which was his dear delight) when others slept. Few men had ever less hindrance from the body, or more dominion over it; a better habited mind and body have rarely dwelt together. No controversies arose among his neighbours, within his notice, which he made it not his business to get presently composed; and his help and advice was wont to be sought by persons of eminent rank, and in matters of very great difficulty and importance, for that purpose: his own love of peace always inclining him, and his great prudence well enabling him, to be exceeding useful, in any such case. Nor were his labours confined within that narrow verge; his name and worth were too well known abroad, to let him be engrossed by one single parish; in how many places did he scatter light, and diffuse the knowledge of God, wheresoever, within his reach, the opportunity of a lecture, occasional, or fixed, did invite!

The state of things, in those days, making it necessary, (and not hindering) that what was to be done for the preservation of common order, must be by the spontaneous associating of the pastors of many congregations; how did he inspirit those assemblies! The deference that was given to him, even by very reverend persons of great value, and much exceeding him in years, with the effectual influence he had upon all their affairs, (manifestly aiming at nothing but the promoting of religion, and the common good) were only arguments of the commanding power of true worth. And the good effects upon the people, showed how much could be done by a naked, undisguised recommendation of one's self to men's consciences, in the sight of God. Nor would his brethren, of greatest value (and divers there were, in those parts, of very great) think it any detraction from themselves to acknowledge much more to the wise, modest, humble activity of his spirit, in their common concernments, than I shall be willing to arrogate to him. He was, upon the whole, a very public blessing, in that country, while he kept his public station in it; and when the time approached of his quitting it, he eminently showed his constant, great moderation in reference to the controverted things, that occasioned his doing so, in all his reasonings with his brethren about them. And it further appeared, in the earnest bent of his endeavours to form the minds of his people, as much as was possible, unto future union, under the conduct of whosoever should succeed him, in the serious care of their souls; and to a meek, unrepining submission to that present separation, which was now to be made between him and them; whereof the extant abridgment of sundry his later sermons to them are an abundant testimony; though such a repression of their sorrows it was not possible to them to receive, otherwise than as dutiful children are wont to do the exhortations of an affectionate, dying father, not to mourn for his death. In the substantial things of religion, no man was more fervently zealous; about the circumstantials, none more cool and temperate.

But he could in nothing prevaricate with his (once settled) judgment, or depart in his practice one ace from it; yet such was the candour and softness of his spirit, that nothing could be more remote from him, than to pass any harsh censures upon those that received that satisfaction in the scrupled points, which he could not: but he continued a most entire, undiminished friendship with many of them, (and several of eminent note, by whom also it was equally cherished, on their parts) even to the last. His great contempt of the world, and remoteness from making the sacred office subservient to secular interest, a design of enriching himself by it, or more than to subsist, too soon appeared in the mean condition to which he was brought

by that deprivation. For though the annual profits of his living were very considerable, yet his free (but well-regulated) hospitality, and large diffusive charity, (wherein his excellent consort, one of the most pious, prudent, well-accomplished matrons I ever knew, most readily concurred with him) kept them from being superfluous, or flowing into coffers. He had laid up no treasure, but in heaven; and was the son of a no-way unlike father, from whom the expectancy of a patrimonial estate could not be great; and whom (to his no small joy while he continued) he survived but a little. So that for some years, (as I have heard him say) he did owe much of his subsistence to the bounty of some worthy citizens of London, whose temper it is to take more pleasure in doing such good, than in having it told the world who they were. His usefulness was such, since his deprivation, (not in serving a party, a thing too mean and little to be ever thought of by him without disdain; but) in pressing the great, and agreed things, that belong to serious, living religion; that it even melts my soul to think of the overwhelming sorrows wherewith the tidings of his death must have been received by multitudes in the west, that were often wont with greatest delight and fruit to enjoy his most lively, edifying labours.

His decease confirms it to us, once more, that nothing belonging to this world of ours, is too good to die. But it is a great argument of God's kind propensions towards it, and speaks much of his good-will to men, that now and then such heavenly creatures are permitted to inhabit it, and such *specimina* and efforts of the divine life to appear, and be put forth in it. It shows God hath not forsaken the earth, and that his tabernacle is with men, when any such are to be found here.

It ought to be reckoned very monitory, and a great rebuke, when such are (earlier than according to natural course) taken away. It should make us love heaven so much the better, that such as he are gathered thither: not that it needs any thing to better it in itself, but that we can now better relish the thoughts that arise out of our own present knowledge; and having seen true goodness exemplified, may thence more easily take our advantage to apprehend what that state is, wherein there will be so vast a collection of excellent creatures, so perfectly good, by most liberal, eternal participations from the first and uncreated Good. How taking is this notion of heaven! I especially pronounce this holy man blessed, saith a great man * in the ancient church, speaking of an excellent person deceased,† for that he hath passed from one order to another (μετατάξατο), and leaving our city, hath ascended to another city, even that of God

* Chrysost. Panegyr. † Philogonius.

himself; and leaving this church of ours, is gone into the church of the first-born who are written in heaven; and hath left our solemn conventions for that of myriads of angels: referring to that of the apostle, (Heb. xii. 20,) and magnifying (that πανήγυρις) that glorious convention, not for the multitude of the powers above only, but for the confluence of the good, with a perfect vacancy of envy, and an abounding, perpetual joy and satisfaction of mind—love, peace, goodness, &c. and every fruit of the Spirit in most plenteous fulness; (to this purpose he speaks) and what an amiable heaven is this!

Yea, and it may incline us to have somewhat the kinder thoughts of this our meaner native element, and less to regret that our earthly part should dissolve and incorporate with it, to think what rich treasure, what shrines of a lately inhabiting Deity, (now become sacred dust) it hath from time to time received, and transmuted into itself. How voluminously have some written of *Roma Subterranea;** of the tombs of martyrs, and other excellent persons, (as many of them were) collected in one little spot of this earth. And if there were as particular an account of the more refined part of the subterraneous London, much more of all places where just and holy men have dropped, and deposed their earthly tabernacles; how would our earth appear ennobled (and even hallowed) by such continual accessions to it, in all times and ages! What a glorious host will arise and spring up, even out of one London! Is not the grave now a less gloomy thing? Who would grudge to lie obscurely awhile, among them with whom we expect to rise, and ascend so gloriously? It should make us diligent in the remaining time of our abode here; what should not the expectation of such a welcome carry us through? "Well done, good and faithful servant," &c. How studious should we be, so to acquit ourselves as he hath done! "Blessed is that servant whom the Lord, when he comes, shall find so doing!" Let us then "be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, as knowing our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

* Jo. Severanus, P. Aringhus, &c.

A SERMON

ON THE MUCH LAMENTED DEATH OF THAT REVEREND AND WORTHY SERVANT OF CHRIST,

MR. RICHARD ADAMS, M.A.

SOMETIME FELLOW OF BRAZEN-NOSE COLLEGE, IN OXFORD,
AFTERWARDS MINISTER OF SAINT MILDRED, BREAD-STREET, LONDON,
MORE LATELY PASTOR OF A CONGREGATION IN SOUTHWARK.

WHO DECEASED FEBRUARY 7, 1697—8.

TO MRS. ANNA ADAMS, WIDOW, AND COLONEL JOHN ADAMS, BROTHER, TO THE DECEASED MR. RICHARD ADAMS.

My honoured Friends,

Death is too common a theme, and too obvious to our sense, to be thought strange, any more than that we live. But that the course of our life, as to the rise, progress, and period of it, is at the dispose of one common Lord of all, because it belongs to a sphere above sense, is little considered by the most. To you, I doubt not, it is far from being a new or unfamiliar thought: and thereupon, that the precious life you have lately seen finished, was measured by Him who could not therein be unkind to him who has gone, or to you who stay behind.

We do, indeed, tempt ourselves, if we expect from his kindness unreasonable things: as that he should, to gratify us, alter the course of nature, or recall the universal commission of death, or only let it stand in force with an exception as to ourselves, our relatives, and friends; or that he should tear his own most inviolable constitutions, by which the present state is to be but transitory, and the future the only fixed state; which were to subvert the whole frame of religion, to nullify the design of redemption, to take down his tribunal, to abolish and lay aside all thoughts of a judgment to come, and finally to make the kingdom of his dear Son to terminate in a dunghill. While no such wish hath place with you, your reconciliation is easy to the Providence that hath for the present bereaved you of so delectable a relation. And the love of God, which, prevailing in you, will prompt you to compliance with his will, must be the evidence of your title to the best blessings of both worlds. For both the things in the other state, ("the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," &c.) and the concurrent operation of all things for good in this present state, do all belong to persons of the same character, the lovers of God. 1 Cor. ii. 9; Rom. viii. 28. Which that you may constantly and fully experience to the end, and in the end, is the serious prayer for you, of

Your very respectful
And affectionate servant in Christ,
JOHN HOWE.

A FUNERAL SERMON.

PHILIPPIANS i. 23, LATTER PART.

The foregoing words are, "I am in a strait betwixt two;" and then it follows: "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."

IF you should have no other subject for your present consideration, than only, that one in your neighbourhood is lately dead; even that itself would deserve your very serious thoughts. The translation of human souls from world to world, and out of this present into their eternal state, is no light matter: and does claim and challenge more serious thoughts, than it is commonly wont to find and meet with. Nor does the commonness of such an occasion at all excuse the slightness of men's thoughts upon it; but rather aggravate it unspeakably more. That which we find to be so common and universal a case, we may be sure will shortly be our own; and as it is now matter of discourse with us, that such a one is dead, we shall, ere it be long, according as we have been more or less regarded in the world, be alike subject of discourse to others. But it is a greater thing, when it can be said, a good man is gone; there is a more special remark to be put upon the decease of such a one, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; the end of that man is peace," as Ps. xxxvii. 37. There is that agreement between his way and his end, they are so much of a piece, and do so exactly correspond; a course transacted in a constant serenity and peace, meeting at length with peace as the end of it; an even course, still, uniform, self-agreeable, ever equal to and like itself, ending at last in peace. Mark this! how he goes off; mark such a life so ending! But it yet challenges more intense consideration, when such a one is taken away from amongst us, and the progress and period of his course come to be viewed together, whose life was a continued series of labours in the Lord's vineyard, from the earlier to the later hours of his day; when

such a one has finished his course, and fought out the good fight of faith, and is entered into his rest; by the vouchsafement of his indulgent Lord and Master is made to rest from his labours, and receive the reward of them, the reward of grace, with a "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord!"

And sure it cannot be ungrateful to you, to be desired here to stay a little, to make a stand, and pause, and entertain yourselves awhile with the consideration of such a theme and subject as this. Especially it cannot be an ungrateful contemplation, to such as have known the doctrine, and purpose, and faith, and charity, and manner of life, of such a one, as the apostle speaks; so as to be told of nothing, but what you knew before: and so they are not dubious and uncertain thoughts, that you are to employ upon such a theme; you are well assured of the truth of the fact, and when you know it to be true, you cannot but discern it to be very considerable and important truth, and of very great concernment to you. What the spirit of such a one has been through his whole course, you have a very high example of in this blessed apostle; and a copy has been written out fair, after such a pattern, by this lately deceased worthy servant of Christ. Besides the many straits and difficulties that great apostle met with in the course and current of his time, he meets with this towards the end of it, to be in "a strait between two;" and he does not know what to choose, *viz.* between these two things, the consideration of what would be the best and most valuable good to himself; and the consideration of what would be more valuable good unto the Christian church; and particularly unto these Christian Philippians, to whom he now writes. He had no doubt at all in the case, but that to depart, and to be with Christ, would be the best and most valuable good to himself; and it was as little to be doubted of, but that his continual abode and stay in this world, would be much more a valuable good unto the Christian church; and unto this or that church in particular, that had enjoyed, and might further enjoy, his most fruitful labours. His difficulty and strait was not either what was best for him, or what was best for them; but which of these two he should, upon the whole, prefer; whether he should prefer his own private interest, or prefer the common interest of Christ in the world. And upon weighing and pondering the matter with himself, he does prefer the latter, so as, without any kind of hesitation, to express a great complacency in it, that he should be continued yet longer, some time longer, for common good, in this world. And it was a most noble piece of self-denial that was exercised herein, if you consider what the apostle's privileges had been. He had been caught up into the third heaven, he had there seen

unutterable things; nor could he doubt his interest in the felicity and glory of the heavenly state. On the other hand, consider, his life here on earth was no voluptuous life, it was not a life of ease and pleasure. See the account that he gives of it in 1 Cor. iv. and 2 Cor. vi. and in *ch.* xi. of the same epistle; and so find, amongst how many deaths he conversed as it were every day of his life; how familiar, labours, and fastings and watchings were to him; yea, stripes and imprisonments; and that he was now at this time a prisoner, as we see in some foregoing verses of this very chapter, (namely, *v.* 13, 14, 16,) even in the very lion's paw, in the continual expectation of being devoured, and not long after to be offered up, as he elsewhere speaks. Yet he seems to take great complacency in the thoughts of having some addition made to his time in this world, on the common Christian account; and that his own blessedness and glory should be, for this reason, a little while deferred: he was patient of this, he could endure it, out of his love to Christ and the souls of men. But as to himself, for what he esteemed, and desired accordingly, as his best and most valuable good, he was in no hesitation or doubt concerning that, but pronounces without any more ado, that he did desire to be dissolved, or depart, (the words may be read either way,) and to be with Christ, which is far better; only he distinguishes what was his own most valuable good, and what was the most valuable good of the Christian church. And though he give this latter the preference, as in itself the more considerable thing, yet, as to himself and his own concerns, "to depart and to be with Christ" he reckons far better: and accordingly he did desire it as such, as better for him; as having nothing to detain him, or nothing which on his own private account, he could so much mind or covet, as that.

Now in this comparison, it is this one side of it, which the words that I have read to you do call us to consider, and confine us to at this time. As to that other part, it lies within the compass of the context, but not of the text; and so we shall not treat of that at present:—but consider, what is the genuine temper and disposition of a Christian, and more particularly of a minister of Christ, in reference to what he is to eye and look upon as his own best and most valuable good; and that is to "depart and to be with Christ." This indeed the apostle speaks of himself, a great and eminent minister of the gospel of Christ. But though this temper and disposition of spirit was agreeable, it was not appropriate to such a one. It is indeed very agreeable, it is very suitable to the spirit of a faithful minister of Christ, in reference to himself, and any interest and concern of his, to desire to depart and to be with Christ; but it is not so agreeable to such a one, as to be appropriate to him,

or to exclude the generality of serious and living Christians; because it is upon one account principally, common to ministers and to other Christians, that this judgment is to be made, and this desire is to have place in reference to that judgment. And, therefore, that is what I will, for the little time that remains, chiefly insist upon:—That it ought to be, and in very great measure is, the temper and character of gracious persons, or sincere Christians, but principally of the faithful ministers of Christ, with reference to any interest or concern of theirs, to desire to leave this world, and to be with Christ.—And in speaking to this, I shall briefly—explain what requires to be explained in it;—show you upon what grounds this temper and disposition of mind is agreeable in the general to sincere Christians, and upon what more peculiar grounds it is more especially suitable to the faithful ministers of Christ: and—so make use of the whole.

I. As to what requires explication. Here we must show you—what the object of this desire is, and then—show you what this desire, with the judgment unto which it is conformable, imports and carries in it. Then we shall proceed to consider the grounds, both with reference to Christians in general, and the faithful ministers of Christ in special, of their having this as an habitual temper of spirit belonging to them.

1. We are to consider the object, which this disposition of spirit here described, has reference to. And that is twofold, *privative*, and positive. There is,—

(1.) The *privative* object, that this disposition has reference to; and that is, departing from hence. Their desire is to be gone, not to stay always here; *i. e.* as to any concern of their own. Indeed, upon other accounts, abstracted from their own and more important, there may be considerations that may induce their willingness to stay; but as to their own concerns, the privative object of their desire, is, to be dissolved, or to be gone, εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι, they would fain be dissolved; take that reading, and this is such a one's sense, "I would fain have my bonds and shackles taken off; I would be loose, not be always confined to a body of sin and death, and to a vain and wicked world; for these are the things to which we are united,"—or, take the other reading,—that are to be left in this departure. To depart, what are we to depart from? Why, the *gravamina*, the most grievous things, are a body of sin and death, and a vain and sinful world. When God sees good, I would depart, says such a one, from these irksome, grievous things, that, while they detain me, torment me every hour. And then—

(2.) There is the *positive* object, that this disposition has reference to; and that is, to be with Christ. This is a mighty thought, if we had time to stay upon it. It is generally to be

considered here, with reference to what state of our Lord Christ this was spoken, and then what it is to be with him in that state.

[1.] With reference to what state of our Lord Jesus this was spoken, "I desire to be with Christ." Christ was not at this time in his state of humiliation; he was not now in the form of a servant; he was not now going to die, and sacrifice himself upon an ignominious cross, as it was mentioned he had done, in the next chapter, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was obedient to death." It is not in reference to this state, but what follows, that this is spoken; "wherefore God has highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name; that at his name, (or in his name,) every knee shall bow, both of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth." It is that state of glory in which he was enthroned, and was receiving the homage of all ranks of creatures, according to their capacities. It is this state that is here referred to. And then,—

[2.] What is it to be with him in this state, that we are to consider: and plain it is, it is not to be with him as spectators only, but in some sort as partakers; not barely as spectators. Indeed, to be so, is a most desirable thing, to all the lovers of Christ; to behold him upon the throne, invested with glory, the highest glory. But this is not all. Indeed, participation with him is sometimes expressed by beholding, as in John xvii. 24. "Father, I will, that they whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory that thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world was laid." But that beholding is fruitive vision; the vision, not of mere spectation, but fruition, by which we enjoy what we see. And so we are taught to reckon concerning this being with Christ in the state of glory. "If we be dead with him, we believe we shall also live with him," by participation of the same glorious, blissful life. Rom. vi. 8, and viii. 17. "If we are children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; that, if we suffer with him, we might be also glorified together." Glorified, is to be made glorious, to be participants of the same glory with him, and not spectators merely. We are not to be glorified merely by a glory that we are to behold, but which we are to bear; not which we are to be the witnesses of only, but the subjects, whereby we are to be made glorious in conformity to him, and in communion with him. And here, that we may more fully conceive the sense of this being with Christ, in the state of perfect felicity and glory, it is requisite we consider these two things,—the highest perfection of the object; and,—a suitable perfection of the subject, according to its capacity, by which it can converse with, and enjoy, what

continually rays, and is communicated, from so glorious and blessed an object.

First. The object in highest perfection; when our Lord Jesus Christ, not considered merely as God, but as God-man, is exalted, and made as glorious as glory could any way make him; when he is exalted, by way of remuneration for what he had done, for what he had suffered, for what he had achieved and accomplished by his doing and suffering, and he is now in all that most perfect dignity and glory that belongs to him on that account; this consideration we are to have of the glorious object. We are to consider the high and most absolute perfection of that Person, the most wonderful one that ever was, and of which neither created nature, nor uncreated, affords the like; that is, such a person, in which all the excellencies of created and uncreated nature did meet, or were united; and all that felicity, and glory, and blessedness, that this person, according to either nature, and both together, doth enjoy. Here is the object wherewith we are to communicate.

Secondly. And then to be with him, as participants, implies the connoted and consequential perfection of the subject in itself; the highest that it is capable of, the perfection of all the powers and faculties belonging to a creature of such a nature; a mind apt to employ itself about things of highest value and excellency, able to comprehend whatsoever is needful and fit to be known of such things, contented not to know what is unfit; a will refined from all terrene tinctures and propensions, enlarged and attempered to the best and highest good. Whence must proceed the liveliest and purest desires, the noblest and most grateful perceptions and delights, the pleasantest and most satisfying relishes and fruitions.

For (the high perfection of the object being supposed) the subject is "the spirit of a just man made perfect," (Heb. xii. 24,) of one arrived out of an imperfect state. No supposable allusion in this text, needs to exclude the real subjective perfection, which is so proper to such spirits and to such a state as is then finally referred to. The satisfaction itself, which results, cannot but be proportionable according to the perfect excellency of the object, and the perfected capacity of the subject; a most entire satisfaction. These two, meeting together, the most glorious object, and a glorified spirit made capable of conversing with it, and enjoying it to the full, this makes that fulness of joy, those pleasures for evermore, that are at God's right hand, or in his power, to dispose of in eternal communication. Ps. xvi. Thus you have some account of the object, privative, and positive; what is to be left, and whom we are to come to; a sinful, mortal body to be left, with a vain and wicked world; and a glorious Lord to be approached, so as to be with him, in actual, and compla-

cential, and eternal communion; to be with him, not as spectators only, but partakers of that glory wherein he is. Then,—

II. We are to consider the temper and disposition itself, of serious Christians, and of the faithful ministers of Christ especially, in reference to this state of the objects. And it is made up of two things,—desire, and—estimation, or judgment; that is the measure of the former, and according whereto that desire is directed.

1. This desire is ἐπιθυμία, intense desire, earnest desire, the fervour of desire. That is, as to myself, and as to any concern of mine, I do most earnestly desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ: ἐπιθυμία signifies not less than that. And then—

2. The judgment that is made of the case, unto which this desire is conformable; that is, that to be with Christ is far better. Far better: it is a strange emphasis that is used in the Greek text, to express this: for there are two comparatives, μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον, "more better," with a mighty surplusage besides in the word conjoined, πολλῷ. "I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ;" which is better, better by much; or incomparably better; better above and beyond all comparison." One comparative would not serve the turn, but he adds another, and then superadds a vast surplusage over and above. This is the judgment of the case, according to which this desire is directed and measured. And now for the reasons of this temper and posture of soul, in reference to this state of the case. There are divers very obvious.

(1.) That this is most agreeable to the law of our creation, to desire and covet the most perfect state whereof we are capable. It is an unnatural thing not to do so, not to covet the perfection of that state that we can finally attain to. Nature, in all creatures, tends to perfection; it is a monstrous disorder in nature, for any creature, if it be capable of choice, to choose a state beneath the highest perfection whereof it is capable. And,—

(2.) It is most suitable to the design of our redemption, whether we consider the privative object, unto which our redemption refers, or the positive: the *privative* object, this world, that we are to forsake and leave, with this flesh, that con-naturalizes us to this world; "Christ gave himself for us, to deliver us from this present evil world." Gal. i. 4. As for his redeemed ones, those for whom he gave himself, he is willing they should be here awhile; but he gave himself for them, that they might not be here always; that he might fetch them out of this horrid abyss of darkness, impurity, and death.

And if you look to the *positive* object, our Lord died to bring us to God. 1 Pet. iii. 18. He suffered once, the just for the unjust, for this purpose. He will never desist, till he have brought us quite home to God. "And it became him, by whom

are all things, and for whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect by sufferings." Heb. ii. 10. He suffered, and those sufferings he underwent were the price of our redemption; and for this, to bring the many sons to glory, that were to be brought. And it becomes Him, that made all things by himself, and for himself, to bring about his great and glorious design this way; to make the Captain of our salvation perfect, *i.e.* perfectly master of his design. And (Rev. v. 9) we are told, that the Lamb that was slain, was slain on purpose that he might redeem us to God by his blood; that he might be capable of saying at last, I have shed my blood, and it has not been in vain; here I have brought back thy wandering strays to thee, that were separate, that had gone off. He has redeemed them to God by his blood, they were gone off from God; and he, in this way, fetches them back to God; never reckoning his work finished till he can say, "Here am I, and the children thou hast given me."

(3.) This most fully answers the gospel call, under which we continually are, as to both the parts of the object, the privative and positive. By the gospel we are called out of the world. This is carried in the very notion of the church; it consists of a people called out of the world. And that call is not finished till we are quite out; but we must be out, in the inclination of our minds to be gone from this world, that we may be with the Lord. And as to the positive part of the gospel-call, the final term of it is the eternal glory. "The God of all grace has called us to his own eternal glory by Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. v. 10.

(4.) This is most suitable unto the aim and tendency of the new creature, which is indeed the effect of the gospel-call; wheresoever it comes to be effectual calling, the new creature is the product. This is the genius of the new creature, to aspire upwards. They that have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within themselves; groan as under a pressure, or burden; to be loosened from this world, from this earth, and from these bodies; and to partake in the glory of the sons of God, manifested in the proper season of their manifestation. Rom. viii. 19, compared with the 23rd. And as they that in the work of the new creation are what they are, new creatures as being born from heaven; so they are born for it. "Except a man be born, ἄνωθεν, from above, he cannot enter into, nor see, the kingdom of God." John iii. 3, 5. He is born for this heavenly state, when he is regenerate, when he is made a new creature, that he may be capable of entering into this kingdom. And, (1 Pet. i. 3,) "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten us again to a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." There are principles inlaid in the work of the

new creature, which dispose the soul Godward, and heavenward. Hereby they are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, as in that Col. i. 12. And to suppose that there should be a new creature without such a disposition as this, is to suppose the new creature to be the most unnatural creature under heaven. It must have dispositions in it suitable to its nature, and to that state that it is designed ultimately for; as every other creature is suited to the place and state it is to hold in the creation of God.

But then as to what is more peculiar to ministers, they have more reason than others for this temper and disposition of spirit, both as they know more, generally, of the difficulties of the world, and should be supposed to know more of the state of the other world, than the generality of other men do. Their toil, and labour, and travail, while they are here in this world, is like to be more; read at leisure, 1 Cor. iv. 9—13, with 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5. They have many more uncomfortable things to exercise them; especially the small success of their labours, that they often do but sow the wind, and sometimes reap the whirlwind, and may be glad to depart on this account. And it is to be supposed, too, that they should know more of the other world: for they are more obliged to be daily conversant there; their constant business has a steady, direct tendency thitherward; and therefore as this cannot but be the temper of serious Christians, it is to be much more so of the faithful ministers of Christ.

III. And therefore, to draw to a conclusion, and shut up all with some use, we may,—

1. Infer from it, the greatness of that capacity which belongs to an intelligent, immortal spirit; that it is capable of such a state, as being glorified with the Lord Jesus Christ in that high exaltation of his; it is a state, whereof the human spirit is capable. It is indeed very unapt, very indisposed, till the regenerating work take place; till the divine Spirit have moulded it to that state; but then, in the mean time, there is a capacity, a ground-work, upon which the divine Spirit does operate, by enlightening the mind, and enlarging the will, and refining and defecating the affections, and implanting celestial principles, that do all dispose it heavenward. But, in the mean time, it is a useful reflection for every intelligent spirit that inhabits mortal flesh, to consider, what do I here? While it is my lot to be yet inhabiting this flesh, am I only to mind the things of the flesh? I am capable of an abode above, with the blessed glorious Lord of all; with him my greater concernments do do now lie. Col. iii. 1, 2. And,—

2. It further lets us see the wonderful love of God in Christ, that he should design such mean abject creatures as we to such a state; that is, that when we depart and leave this world, we

are to be with Christ. O kind design! What admirable love is this, that he will not have his own to be always at a distance and far from him! "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory," in that of Col. iii. 4. And again further,—

3. We may infer hence, that holiness, wherever it comes to have place, does comprehend and include in it divine wisdom, so as to make persons capable of judging right, or making a true estimate of things, which are more valuable, and which are less. Till the sanctifying work of God's Spirit take place in the minds and hearts of men, they judge like fools; they say, "A portion here on earth is better; let us dwell always amidst the darkness and death of this lower world, and let them be with Christ that will." "But," says a gracious spirit, "to be with Christ is far better, incomparably, beyond all comparison better, and therefore let us depart, and be with him, as to any interest and concern of ours." And this being so, it is of the greatest consequence to us imaginable, for all of us to endeavour to get this temper of spirit made habitual to ourselves: for it is a thing of dreadful importance, to find the temper of my mind and soul differ from that of all good Christians that ever were, or ever shall be. It is one thing, indeed, to be willing to have the height of our happiness deferred for common good; but it is quite another thing to desire to stay here, because I love this world better, and when the practical judgment of our souls is, I had rather be here; when not any concern for the interest of Christ, or design of doing him service here, does reconcile me to an earthly state; but my own temper and spirit is such, that I cannot endure the thoughts of a remove. And let me insist here a little. When the best are continually going; and though the worst do not go the same way, they are going hence too, departing from hence; not to be willing to follow! To have a desire running counter to the stream and course of nature, in all, and the current of grace in the best, is very unaccountable; and wherein we should by no means tolerate ourselves. An irrational desire of what we see to be impossible; a desire that fights against necessity, which will be too hard for us, and will overcome at last; as to the term *from* which, an abode here: and an unholy desire, in respect of the term *to* which, *viz.* not to be with Christ; such a desire we should no more endure in ourselves, than fire in our bosoms. To have such an excellent person gone from amongst us, as is lately gone; but to have no disposition to follow! You loved him well, and you loved to hear him preach of heaven, but you cannot endure the thoughts of going where he is gone! Is this well? The world is dying, and you would live! *miser est quicunque non vult, mundo secum moriente, mori.*—*Sen. Trag.* What a wretched

miscreant is he, that would be an exception from all mankind, and cannot be content to die, when the whole world is dying with him! And for Christians united with Christ, they are such in whose hearts there is a rooted propension towards him, so as to covet his presence above all things. (Rev. xxii.) "The Spirit and the bride say, come," come Lord Jesus; either come and take us to thee, or come and manifest thyself to us. Consider, then, how absolutely necessary it is, if there be this terrene temper of spirit, to get it changed. For,—

(1.) While it remains, it countermines the sum of religion. All Christianity runs counter, in the whole design of it, to this temper of spirit, for it terminates on the other world. But when all our thoughts and designs terminate on this world, what a dismal thing is it; to have a temper and disposition in me, wholly repugnant to the design of the Christian religion, which is but to draw people off from this world, and to fit them for another!

(2.) It will infer, in the next place, that whenever any die, they must die just after the same manner that wicked men do, a violent death; be torn away from their earthly station. "He shall pluck him out of his dwelling-place, and root him out of the land of the living," as the Psalmist speaks, Ps. lii. 5. This is dying a violent death; our hearts do not consent, we cannot go but as we are torn up by the roots, and plucked out of our dwelling-places. This is quite another thing from that, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace;" and this "desiring to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." And it signifies,—

(3.) Our not yet having taken God for our God; for our taking him to be our God, and to be our best good, is the same thing. If God be not our best good, he is not our God: and can we choose to be willing to be at an eternal distance from our best good? It must signify, that the love of God has no place in us, sincere love, true love to Christ; for it is never true, if it be not supreme. But it is the greatest absurdity imaginable, that I should supremely love one that I desire never to be with, or enjoy. I shall only add, with reference to the sad occasion that lies in view before us, that what instances we meet with of this kind, should leave their several correspondent effects and impressions upon our spirits, partly of lamentation, and partly of imitation, and partly of peaceful submission and satisfaction of the issue, however grievous it be to us.

1. Of lamentation. It is a much to be lamented thing, when such go as that reverend and worthy person that is lately gone from amongst you. For this temper of spirit being supposed, by how much the more there was of the conjunct disposition to have been content to have stayed longer for public good, this speaks so much the more of an excellent spirit: when desires

are so fervent after the purity and perfection of the heavenly state, that nothing but sincere devotedness to the interest of God in Christ could make them patient of longer abode on earth. It is a respect to God that either draws or detains them; nothing but what is divine inclines them either way; either the enjoyment of God above, or his further service here below. That is an excellent spirit that lies under such influences. And the higher was the excellency of such a man, the greater is the loss of him. The more he desired heaven, within such limits, the greater was his value, and with so much the brighter lustre he shone on earth. There is much of God conspicuous in such a man. And it was not a little of him that was observable in this worthy person. Such a course as his was, that even course, that peaceful course, wherein was so eminent devotedness to God, and benignity towards man, showed his spirit was touched by the one for the other. It could not be, but by influence from heaven, that he so steadily tended thitherward himself, and was only willing to stay so long out of it, that he might invite and draw on as many as he could with him thither. Hereby he appeared so much the more attempered to the heavenly state, and that world where divine love governs, making a man by how much the more strongly he was attracted himself by it, so much the more desirous to attract others. It is what such a one has about him of God on earth, that makes him a desirable thing to us here. It is not what men have of the earthly spirit, but what they have of the divine spirit, that makes them useful, both by their labours and examples, to this world of ours; as was this eminent servant of Christ. It is a great thing to have one pass so long continued a course as his was, with so equal a temper. It is like I may have known him longer than many or most of you that were not related.

About fifty years I remember his course, and our conversation was not casual or at a distance, as that of mere colleagues, chosen by others, but as friends inward, and chosen by ourselves; many a day we have prayed together; conferred and taken sweet counsel together; when he was at once an example and ornament to his college, where he lived respected and beloved of all, but of them most who most knew him; that constant serenity, and equality of mind, that seriousness, that humility, wherein he excelled, rendered him amiable to observers; and therewith that industry and diligence that he used in his younger days, by which he laid up that great stock of learning and useful knowledge, that made him (when Providence called him to the city) a well-instructed scribe, capable and apt to bring out of his treasury things new and old; whereof there is and will be a long extant proof, in his judicious and dilucid expositions of the epistles to the Philippians and the Colossians,

which was the part he bore in the supplement to that most useful work, the English Annotations on the Bible, by the Rev. Matthew Poole. In the great city he shone a bright and burning light; till many such lights were in one day put under a bushel; I need not tell you what, or how black, that day was. And then, though he was constrained to desert his station, he did not desert his Master's work; but still he was with God, and God was with him: and you know it, I doubt not, many of you, what it was to live under so truly evangelical a minister; to have doctrine from time to time distilling as the dew, and dropping upon you, such as from which you might perceive how great was his acquaintance with the mysteries of Christ: in reference to those over whom he had opportunity to watch, it was undoubtedly, if it were not their great fault, their very great advantage.

As to his domestic relations, knowing so much of him, I cannot but so much the more lament their loss; God will, I doubt not, be the bereaved widow's portion; but it ought with tenderness to be considered, what it was for one person to lose successively two such helps as this and her former husband were, (who was also, in another university, my former and most inward friend, that worthy man, Mr. Thomas Wadsworth,) both eminent instruments in the church of Christ. And this has been more eminently remarkable concerning him that is lately gone, that the relations of the family, to whom he was not naturally related, the branches from another root, yet had that apprehension of his love and care of them, and of their own loss, as to desire this public testimony might from them remain of him, that he was to them as tender a father as if he had been a natural one; such fathers-in-law are seldom known, and therefore it ought to be mentioned, as that which may signify somewhat towards the embalming of his memory among you. Graces, when diffused, give their pleasant relishes to all that any way partakeof them.

What follows was delivered in writing into my hands to be inserted, by a dear relation of his:—"His humility and self-denial were eminently conspicuous in his taking upon him the care and charge of so small and poor a people, and continuing with them to the damage of his own estate, though he had considerable offers elsewhere. His meekness, as it was very visible in all his conversation, it was singularly showed in his bearing and passing by slights and affronts, even from those he had very much obliged, taking off the resentments that his friends had of the injuries of that kind put upon him, by abasing himself, saying, 'I am an unworthy creature, I deserve no better.' His candour every one was certainly made sensible of, who should offer to speak any thing reflecting about any person behind their

backs, for he was sure to vindicate or lenify in this case, as far as he could.

"When labours, weakness, and age had worked out his strength of body, there was never any thing appeared so manifestly to trouble him, as being necessitated to desist from constant preaching. And, notwithstanding all temporal discouragements he met with in the course of his ministry, his mind to the very last was to have both his sons brought up to it. During the short time of his last illness, when his head appeared somewhat disordered in other things, by the pains that were upon him, it was observable, that he always showed himself sensible in hearing or discoursing about any thing religious. Being among other things discoursed with by his brother about the discharge of his ministry, he answered, 'he hoped he had endeavoured to serve God faithfully and sincerely, though he had been an unprofitable servant.' About five hours before his death he said, 'God is my portion;' and desired those about him to join with him in prayer, wherein he expressed himself very suitably to his case as a dying man, concluding thus: 'Grant that when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, I may be taken to those mansions not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

"As his life was calm and serene, so was his dying, for though throughout his sickness he was all along apprehensive of approaching death, there was no ruffle upon his spirit; of which he himself then gave this account, 'I know in whom I have believed.'"

2. Of imitation. And as such strokes, when they come, ought to be lamented, they that by such strokes are taken away, ought to be imitated. The example remains; you have the idea left; you know how such a one lived, how he walked, how he conversed with his family, how he conversed with you as he had occasion: that excellent spirit he discovered in all, how much of an imitable example has it given to all those that are capable of imitating and receiving instruction that way!

3. Of satisfaction. But it ought also to have the effect of satisfaction in the divine pleasure. When such a blow as this comes, do not repine, peacefully submit, though it carry smartness and severity with it. You ought to feel it, but yet, notwithstanding, to receive it with submissive silence, to be dumb, and not open your mouths, remembering who hath done it, and that it is at the disposal of wisdom that cannot err, as well as of power that cannot be resisted; and of kindness and goodness that has its gratefulness to this departed servant of his. For consider, that notwithstanding his willingness to have stayed longer, if his Lord, "whose he was and whom he served," had thought fit: yet this could not but be his habitual sense, to "desire to depart and to be with him, which was far better."

And if Christ be pleased, and he be pleased, why should we be displeased?

This was the will of *Christ*, declared by his word, as to the thing, (John xvii. 24,) "Father, I will, that those that thou hast given me, be with me where I am, to behold my glory;" and declared by the event as to the time: and *his* will, both because it was Christ's, and because it was best. Who are we that we should oppose our will to so kind a will on Christ's part, and so well-pleased a will on his part? or that a dissatisfaction should remain with us, as to what there is, with Christ and him, so entire satisfaction!

A FUNERAL SERMON,

FOR

THAT EXCELLENT MINISTER OF CHRIST,

THE TRULY

REV. WILLIAM BATES, D.D.

WHO DECEASED JULY 14, 1699.

TO THE RIGHT NOBLE

WILLIAM,

DUKE AND EARL OF BEDFORD; MARQUIS OF TAVISTOCK, LORD RUSSELL, BARON RUSSELL OF THORNHAUGH, LORD LIEUTENANT OF THE COUNTIES OF MIDDLESEX, BEDFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE; KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER, AND ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,

THE peculiar and just respect which your Grace hath long had for the worthy person whose much lamented decease occasioned the following discourse, easily induced me to believe it would not offend your Grace, that your illustrious name is prefixed to it: as it also was the sense of his mournful relict that it could be no less than your Grace's right such a memorial should be extant, of the favourable aspects wherewith you have been pleased to honour this her so dear relative. Nor can it be unsuitable to the noble amplitude of your truly great mind, that it should be told the world you knew how to value true worth, wheresoever you found it: not confining your respects to any party; or distinguishing men by any, when especially the parties themselves are distinguished by marks, which they who wear them count indifferent, and which, therefore, must be understood to make men neither better nor worse. And if they who wear them not, count otherwise, though they should be mistaken in their judgment, after their having endeavoured to the uttermost to be rightly informed; their sincerity, accompanied and evidenced by great self-denial, must in the account of so equal and candid a judge as your Grace, far outweigh so light a mistake in so small matters. Such differences will be easily tolerable, where there is that mutual charity as neither to think a different judgment to be bribed with dignities and emoluments, on the one hand; nor to be perverted by humour and affectation of singularity, on the other.

The reverend doctor's great candour and moderation, in reference to the things wherein he hath been constrained to differ from many excellent persons, and his remoteness from any disposition to censure them from whom he differed, have been these many years conspicuous to all that knew him. The apprehension having been deeply inwrought into the temper of his mind, that the things wherein only it could be possible for truly good men to differ, must be but trifles, in comparison of the much greater things wherein it was impossible for them not to agree. And I no way doubt, but the things for which your Grace most deservedly valued this excellent person, were such as have in them an inherent and immutable goodness; not varying with times, or the changeable posture of secular affairs, but which must be the same in all times; nor appropriate to persons of this or that denomination, but that may be common to persons sincerely good of any denomination whatsoever. Whereupon the testimony your Grace hath from time to time given of your value of him, on such an account, must have redounded to yourself; have reflected true honour on your own name; shown your discerning judgment of persons and things; and entitled you to his prayers; which, I hope, have been available to the drawing down of blessings on yourself and your noble family.

Unto whose must his prayers also be added, for the same purposes, who is, with greatest sincerity, and under many obligations,

Your Grace's most obedient,

And most humble servant,

JOHN HOWE.

A FUNERAL SERMON.

It is grievous to me to tell you in whose room and stead I do now stand in this place this day. Nor do I need; you can tell yourselves, observing the stated courses and alterations held in this lecture, that, if the counsels of Heaven had agreed with our desires and hopes on earth, this is the day, this is the hour, wherein you had again seen the face and heard the voice of that excellent servant of Christ, whom we now lament as lost to us, and dead out of our world. Not absolutely dead: for God, who is his God for ever and ever, is not the God of the dead but of the living. Dying out of this world, he was born into the other. But in that sense wherein he is dead to us, and this world of ours, what remains but that we agree to say, Let us die with him? And these are the words which, if God will graciously afford us his help and presence, we may fruitfully entertain ourselves with, upon this sad occasion, at this time: you will find them in—

John xi. 16.

Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

The history to which these words belong contains so illustrious and instructive an instance of the Redeemer's power over both worlds, and so plainly shows that he could, at his pleasure, translate men out of the one into the other, as might best serve the proper purposes of his redemption; that it can never be unseasonable to us to consider it, who are always subject to the same power. And it is very especially seasonable at this time, when we have reason enough to reconsider his late use of this power in another kind less grateful to us, but not less wise or just in itself; not the recalling of one out of the other world into this, but the calling away of one out of this world into the other; the translating of this excellent person from among us, whose longer abode here had been highly desirable, as his removal is

most bitterly grievous, and must have been intolerable, were it not that though this is not the same act, it is an act of that same power over lives, which in all its exertions, we are always to behold with the same profound, adoring silence, and a disposition of mind to receive instruction from it, whether it be pleasing to us or displeasing. I will make no apology for my recalling your thoughts, so long after, to this sad theme. Our mutual endearedness, his condescending affection to me, and my reverential affection to him, were so generally known to those that knew either of us, that it might be expected I should take some public notice of this severing stroke; and I may suppose my circumstances to be so known, that it is obvious to every one to understand I could do it no sooner.

It will not be unuseful to make some brief reflection upon this miraculous work of our Lord, and thence return to the special subject, which I desire your thoughts may be fixed upon, as mine have been. It was the most memorable of all our Lord's works of this kind, yet not mentioned by the other evangelists; lest, as is supposed, it should revive the Jewish malice against Lazarus; who, as Epiphanius tells us, was reported to have lived thirty years after, within which time the others had all written, whereas this evangelist wrote not till after his final decease. It was wrought for the same great end for which all his wonderful works were done and written, generally, for the glory of God, as is intimated, *v.* 4, and particularly, as this evangelist tells us, (*ch.* xx. 20, 21,) "that we might believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing we might have life through his name." And though they all had this design, this towards the end of his course seems meant for the last and conclusive stroke, having a brighter and more conspicuous appearance of the divine glory in it, for a fuller and more convictive demonstration that he was the Son of God and the Messiah, as he gave himself out to be. And all things were designed in the aptest subserviency hereto; that, once for all, this long disputed point might be put out of all doubt.

For this end it is ordered that Lazarus should at this time fall sick. Nothing more appeared to human prospect, but that the disease befell him according to the common course of natural causes: but, says our Lord, "this sickness is not unto death," *viz.* as the final and permanent event or design of it; "but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." *v.* 4. God's counsels lie deep, not obvious to common view. When such a servant of God is fallen sick, we know not what he intends to bring out of it. His glory may, in his own way and time, so much the more brightly shine forth, though we yet distinctly know not when or how. Upon this account,

when our Lord not only heard of Lazarus' sickness, but knew he was dead, he yet defers two days, even though he knew him to have been at least two days dead before; so that when he now comes to the place, he finds him to have lain four days in the grave. *v.* 17. He resolves to give so much the greater scope and advantage to the glory of the divine power to display and evidence itself. He defers, till now death and the grave were in full dominion, that his conquest might be the more glorious. He had before raised some from death, none from the grave. The lamenting relatives were now in despair; the thoughts of restitution were quite laid aside. All their hopes were buried with the deceased in the same grave, as may be collected from sundry following verses.

In the like despair, not long after, were the mournful disciples, concerning their not only deceased but entombed Lord, unto whose surprising resurrection, this seems a designed prelude. The bereaved relations, and their comforters, were all abandoned to sorrow, and drenched in tears. And with the rest we are told, (*v.* 35,) that "Jesus wept." But why was this? Was it that he knew not his own mind, or distrusted his own power? He had given sufficient intimation of his own purpose, and of the foresight he had of the certain, glorious issue of this gloomy, dark providence. It is evident, therefore, for what he wept not. It is not so obvious to conclude for what he wept. It is most unworthy of him to suppose his was feigned sorrow, or that he shed hypocritical tears. Nor was this the only instance of his weeping: no, no, he was a man of sorrow, acquainted with griefs; and had always in view sufficient cause of real soul-trouble, as this is called, *v.* 33. "He groaned *in spirit*, and was troubled." It must be, by the contexture of the evangelical history, near the time of his weeping over Jerusalem, when his soul was filled and taken up with sad and mournful themes.

But who can tell what thoughts lay deep in that large and comprehensive mind? We are sure, though he wept with the rest, that it was not as they wept, nor from the same motives. His thoughts were not as their thoughts, but as far wider and higher, as the heavens are than the earth. We have no way to know what his thoughts were, we know what they might be. He saw not Jerusalem only, but all this world buried in sin and death. He could not, as the second Adam, be "the resurrection and the life," as he speaks, (*v.* 25,) without beholding, with a compassionate heart, the impurities and miseries wherewith it was deluged by the first. And he had now enough in view to discompose his pure mind, intent upon high and great things, that when his business into this world was to prepare men for another; and, when they were fit, to translate them thither;

even they that professed to believe on him, should no more understand him; that his kind and great design should be no more grateful to them, and so slowly enter into their minds and hearts, that when they saw one such translation, it should so much displease them, and they so little relish it, as to be all in tears and lamentations thereupon; and thereby discover such affixedness of heart and spirit to this present world, and state of things, as to prefer the enjoyment of a friend on earth, before all the glories of the heavenly state; so might their immoderate weeping some way cause his tears. But when he expressed his trouble by groans and tears, he suppressed the causes of it, and goes on to his present intended work. In order hereto, (*v.* 39,) he commands the grave-stone to be removed, neglecting the objection, (*v.* 39,) "By this time he stinks."

He observed, with a compassionate indulgence, the diffidence which he meant speedily to refute. Nor, because we also are too prone to prescribe limits to the divine power, ought we, for his indulgence, to be the less severe to ourselves. Forgetting the transcendency of that power, we think this or that strange, and scarce possible to be done, because we too lightly consider the equal or greater strangeness of what we see is done. We count things easy that are by use become familiar to our senses, and apprehend we have the notion of them clear, and how they can come to be as they are; not having examined or inquired whether our apprehensions were right and congruous, or not. Things that have not struck our sense, making ourselves and even our sense the measure, we count impossible and unconceivable.

By the course of nature our sense hath told us, a body so long in the grave must be putrid and stink. But who settled that course of nature? If we ascend not to the original cause, the fixation of that course is as admirable and unaccountable; if we do, a departure from it is as easy. What can the wisest philosophers conceive of the difference between an offensive smell and a grateful, but the different disposition, or texture of the particles of matter, in relation to the *sensorium*, or the receptive organ; when what the different disposition is, remains altogether unapprehensible, and what no man can tell? We go away well satisfied concerning what we see happens every day, because we never inquire how things came to be as they are; when what we have not known to come to pass, though not more difficult, we say can never be. Otherwise we should think it no more admirable, or difficult, to reduce in a moment the parts of matter to such a *situs*, as that they should give no offence to the sense of smelling, though before they did, than it was to the same power so to dispose, that in one sort of location they should give that offence, in another they should

not, and, perhaps, in a third, highly gratify and please. Thousands of like instances might be given, but this comes now in our way.

The world is full of miracles; we are compassed about with such, and are such. There is, it is true, a peculiar notion of them, as necessary as they are themselves; signifying not what is done by a greater power, but less usual. As such, the use and need of them only argues the infirmity of our minds, sunk into earth and sense, and grown somnolent; whence they need to be roused by surprising and uncommon things, and brought to consider that He only, who could fix and settle the so steady course of nature, could alter it, and make it forsake its wonted tract; which he must always be supposed to do for some very weighty, important end and reason; so absolute power being ever in strict connection with the most perfect wisdom, and therefore claiming to be the more earnestly attended to, and considered the more deeply. To that power that could create a man, it was equally easy to perfume a grave, or to make a new man spring up out of it, in fresh strength, comeliness, and vigour; to recompose the disordered parts of a body turning to dust, and refit it for the union and use of the returning soul:—this he will not do often, but he saw a just and valuable reason for his doing it at this time.

He was now to give and leave behind him a full, conclusive demonstration, once for all, of his being the Son of God, by whom the worlds were made; and the Christ, or Messiah, (the great controverted point of that time) which (*v.* 5) is called glorifying the Son; who, for asserting this, was calumniated as an impostor and deceiver of the people. He was to give a specimen of his power, as such, over universal nature, and that he could at pleasure control and countermand the most established laws of it; all things being put, under that notion, as he was the Christ, into his hands, and all power given him both in heaven and earth, so as that by him all things must consist;*—a power he was to use, being gradually, and at last perfectly, to make all things new.† He was to make good his own title, "I am the resurrection and the life,"‡ which he assumes in this context to let it be seen he was no vain pretender; and that it was no vain faith that should be placed upon him in this respect; but that what he should now do, as to one, he was equally able to do, in the fit season, for every one, "when all that are in their graves should hear his voice."§ He was to show forth a resemblance of that more peculiar act of his most graciously undertaken office, to be a spring of life to souls morally dead, *viz.* in trespasses and sins.‖ To give this divine and most noble kind of

* John xiii. 3. Matt. xxviii. 18. Col. i. 17. † Rev. xxi. 5. ‡ Ver. 25.
§ Chap. v. 28. ‖ Ephes. ii.

life! To do that most merciful and most Godlike work! He was to take away all cause or pretence for despair, but that, whereas a death was to pass upon himself, and upon his church on earth, both he himself, and it, with his dead body should arise.* Therefore he utters that mighty, commanding voice, at which rocks and mountains tremble and shiver, and which all the powers of nature must obey: "Lazarus, come forth!" And he comes forth. These things we now lightly touch, hoping they may be of further use to us afterwards.† We expect not the like thing in our present mournful case; but we expect greater things; for which we are to wait our Lord's season.

In the mean time, let us return and consider what is overtured in the case the text refers to, when, as to any such remedy, the mourning friends expected as little as we. Here was a worthy, good man gone; a friend of Christ, and of his friends. Christianity gives no man a terrestrial immortality; Christians, even the best of them, must die as well as other men. This was a matter taken to heart by Christ himself, as we have seen, in a way becoming and worthy of him. His disciples also are deeply concerned, and they consider and discourse it their way. One of them, Thomas, who also was called Didymus (wherein is no other mystery, than that his name is first given us in Hebrew, then in Greek, as is not unexampled elsewhere) proposes, as you have heard: "Let us also go, that we may die with him." Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. There was, no doubt, an abounding fulness of sense in this good man's soul, from whence these words did proceed. And it might be twofold; either—Good and commendable, fit for our imitation, and whereto the temper of our spirits should be conformed. Or,—Faulty and reprehensible; such as against which we should arm and fortify ourselves.—Such mixtures are not to be thought strange. It is little to be expected, that in what is hastily said by the best on earth, on an occasion apt to stir passions, there should be nothing but pure breathings of heavenly wisdom and goodness.

I. Under the former head, we shall speak of divers things, which we cannot, indeed, be sure were the explicit, distinct sense of this good man, at this time; but which might be, and should be ours on a like occasion; which well agree with Chris-

* Isa. xxvi. 19.

† Where Lazarus's soul had been in the meantime, was too light a matter to weigh against these mighty things our Lord was intent upon. His concerns were to yield and bow to his Lord and Master's great designs: he could not be unfitter for his own business afterwards, than the apostle in the like case (for aught that he himself knew) was for his. The consideration of this matter did not divert our Lord Christ from what he was intent upon; nor let it divert us, but as a lighter matter, be left for the exercise of lighter minds.

tian principles, and which his words serve aptly enough to express; as—

1. A firm belief of a future state. Did this good man only desire to partake with the other in death, and no more? Did his wish terminate here? Can we apprehend any thing good or desirable in mere death, that one would covet to share in with another, or which one would be loath he should engross alone? Nor could Thomas mean this, having heard that Lazarus was already dead. It cannot be thought, that one who had been some years in immediate attendance upon the Son of God, the Lord from heaven, and under his instructions; and who had so much opportunity to observe that his whole design lay for another world, and that he never encouraged his followers to expect from him any advantages above others, in this world, but forewarned them of troubles and sufferings, to which they would be always liable from it, and that they must be content to wait for their rewards in another state:—it is not to be thought that such a one was an infidel in reference to any such state; or that he thought his friend extinct by dying; or that when he wished to be with him, he wished to be nowhere, or nothing.

2. A mind loose and disengaged from this present world. He could be intent upon no great designs for this earth, who with the next that leaves it, was willing to go too.

3. Easy, placid thoughts of dying. He looked upon death as no such frightful thing, that could so familiarly, and off-hand, say, when he thought of such a one's dying, "Come, let us go and die with him."

4. A distinguishing judgment concerning the states of men hereafter, remote from thinking it fares with all alike in the other world; but well informed, that it could only be ill with ill men, and well only with the good: a settled persuasion of a judgment to come, according to the declared rules of which judgment, this present judgment is formed. That they who continue in a course of well-doing, shall have eternal life; evil doers, indignation and wrath.*—This wish could not be thought less cautious than his, who says, with distinction, "Let me die the death of the righteous."†—It must be far from him to be content God should gather his soul with sinners.‡ The future state was, no doubt, considered as a state of separation between men and men. He could not covet to be associated with good and bad, promiscuously, and at random.

5. A rationally charitable opinion and estimate, that he was sincerely good and happy with whom he coveted to be united in death. Such an opinion is all that is here requisite. Faith it cannot be, for the object is not a revealed thing. Knowledge

* Rom. ii. 7, 8. † Numb. xxiii. 10. ‡ Ps. xxvi. 9.

it is not, for we have no medium to know it by. That we have more reason to think this than the contrary of such a one, is sufficient, and that this should be implied in this wish is necessary. Here was an apprehension of a happy state the other was passed into. That saying, *sit anima mea cum philosophis*, implied that he who said it, thought their state better than some other men's. And Thomas could not but have sufficient reason for his apprehension of Lazarus's sincerity, so as not to doubt of his felicity. His house, he observed, was our Lord's resort: here he was received gladly by him and his good sisters. His doctrine, we have cause to think, he entertained as well as himself, and himself for his doctrine's sake. The peculiar affection our Lord had for him, observed by the domestics, that say, "He whom thou lovest is sick," (*v.* 3,) noted by the Jews, with a—"Behold how he loved him," (*v.* 35,) could leave Thomas no ground of doubt, but he was a sincere believer on the Son of God, and now in a blessed state: so are Christians, visibly such, to esteem of one another, and accordingly to have communion with one another in grace; and hope and wish for it in glory:—a temper, now, very alien from too many that go under that name; who make not the great substantials of Christianity the measure of their present and hoped communion, but devised additions of their own: or rather, not what they add to, but substitute in the stead of, faith, mercy, and the love of God; and license themselves to ascend the throne, usurp the seat of judgment, and boldly damn all them who are not of their own complexion and party; and that cannot so far conform to their humours, passions, prejudices, and interested inclinations, as to say and act in every thing just as they do.

6. A most ardent and most generous love to such good men, upon that just and reasonable apprehension of them. For, what love can be greater? How can one more highly express love to any man, than by a declared willingness to live and die with him; and simply to die, when he can no longer live with him? Love raised to this pitch is stronger than death. Heathen story is not without such instances of some, whom no dread of death could sever from each other; but that they have been willing, as the case should require, to die with, or to die for, another; to be either each other's companions or substitutes in death. The tyrant Dionysius having sentenced to death one of that admirable pair, Damon and Pythias, and fixed the day of execution, the condemned person petitioned for leave to be absent upon important occasions; in that interval his friend offering himself as his sponsor, to die for him if he returned not by the appointed day. He returning punctually with all diligence, knowing his friend's life to be otherwise in hazard, the tyrant,

in great admiration of their mutual love and fidelity, pardons the condemned, and requests of them both that they would admit him, as a third person, into the society of their friendship.*

What they tell us of divers others I mention not, whom no death could sever; whom dangers did more closely unite. Such as are conjoined in the same common cause, their mutual love mutually animates them even to face death; because each finds the other will not flinch, or leave him in danger alone. Many waxed bold by the apostle's bonds,† when they could not but be thought bonds of death; no doubt, because he was dear to them; so that they were willing even to run into the same bonds, because he was bound by them. Even in this sense love casts out fear. And what could more either express his own love, or tend to inflame other men's, than when that great apostle bespeaks the Christians of that time, as having his life bound up in theirs? "I live, if ye stand fast;"‡—that he was ready to impart, with the gospel, even "his own soul to them, because they were dear to him;"§ and that "they were in his heart to live and die with him."‖ There seemed to be but one life common to him and them. When there are such unions, that each is to the other an *alter ego*, "another self;" and another's soul is to a man as half his own,¶ as he pathetically phrases it, here is the height of affection! And that affection mutually heightens each other's courage, and is a continual and reciprocated source of a generous magnanimity springing from the one into the other's breast; while they perceive in one another a mutual vying, who shall the more adventurously rush upon death for, or in conjunction with, the other.

This seems not alien from the temper of Thomas's mind in his uttering of these words. For when our Lord proposed going into Judea, other of the disciples objecting that the Jews had there lately sought to kill him; he, when he understood Lazarus was dead, whom he knew to be a friend to that cause, though he died not for it; "Come," says he, "let us now fear no death, let us rush *in media arma*, throw ourselves into the midst of death, and there breathe forth our souls, full of love to God, and Christ, and him, and one another; even upon the same spot where this friend of our Lord, and our common cause and interest, breathed forth his." These noble principles, fortitude and love, might have made two distinct heads of discourse: but they are so complicated, and interwoven with one another, that they were scarce to be considered apart. And this complication

* Related by Cicero, de Offic. lib. iii. and divers others.
† Phil. i. 14. ‡ 1 Thes. iii. 8 § Chap. ii. 8.
‖ 2 Cor. vii. 3. ¶ Hor.

these words more than intimate—"That their hearts may be comforted, (or inclined, and stirred up, as the word there used signifies) being knit together in love."*

7. A lively apprehension of the large, abounding diffusion of the divine fulness; sufficiently able to replenish and satisfy all that shall be prepared to partake in it. That this good man's eye was upon somewhat else than mere death, and that he coveted not to die for dying's sake, must be out of doubt with us. He certainly aimed at a blessed state after death. And who can suppose his mind void of that common notion, that the blessedness of souls must lie in God? But this could not be all. The faint, spiritless notion of a felicity to be enjoyed in God, could signify little to the present purpose. Here must be a lively, gustful apprehension of it too; for here is intervening death to be gone through. And he expresses himself willing to attempt this difficult pass. "Let us go—that we may die." How few do you know, or converse with, that are without this notion, that God is the blessedness of souls; or that assent not to it as soon as they hear it! Yet how few do you know that are willing to die, to enjoy him! No, no, they are generally willing rather to eat the dust of the earth, and feed upon ashes, thousands of years, than go to God for a better portion! Notwithstanding their dead, spiritless, inefficacious notion of a divine heavenly felicity, they had rather want it. A blessedness not to be had on earth, or that must come by dying! they bless themselves from such a blessedness! It is plain, then, there must be more than a dead notion to overcome their aversion to dying. And what can that be more? It is as plain, it must be a vivid apprehension of such a blessedness in God after death. And that imports two things.

(1.) A divine faith of it. It must be the apprehension of faith, and of a divine faith. Almost every one pretends to believe it, but it is generally with a human faith only; because their parents, or preachers, or the common voice of the country, hath told them so. A divine faith is full of divine life and vigour; the substance and evidence of what is believed. The soul being overpowered into this belief by the majesty, and authority of the great God revealing it, and the awfulness of his testimony; the word of God revealing this, as other portions of sacred truth, works effectually in them that so believe it: *i.e.* that receive it "not as the word of man, but as the word of God."† They that live in the "hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised,"‡ would break through a thousand deaths to obtain it. This is more than a spiritless notion. And,—

(2.) Such a lively apprehension hath in it somewhat of a

* Col. ii. 2. † 1 Thess. ii. 13. ‡ Tit. i. 2.

present sense and foretaste of that blessedness; a heaven begun, which is of the same kind with their future heaven. They have the kingdom of God in them, which stands in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."* Such an earnest speaks their own right, while they are yet sensible of the great imperfection of their present state. They are therefore willing to die, that they may be made perfect. They now know by taste what it is to enjoy God. "O taste and see that God is good!"† A mere notion informs us not enough, so as to actuate our minds, what that means. Notwithstanding it, the carnal mind can frame no distinct heart-moving thought of felicity; other, or more grateful, than the relishes of meat and drink, or the satisfaction of some or other mean or carnalized appetite. They that have tasted somewhat of a higher kind, long for more; and most of all, that most perfect fruition which they must pass through death to attain.

We will not suppose this good man to have been destitute of such a faith, and of such tastes, of the heavenly felicity. And as hereby he was not without a lively apprehension of the kind and nature of it, so we must suppose him to have a like apprehension of the large, copious, abounding, and diffusive fulness of it; whereof his words give some intimation: "Let us go and die with him." He doubted not of a sufficiently extensive communion in this blessedness; *q. d.* there is enough for him and us all. And such an apprehension we all ought to have of the blessedness of the heavenly state, into which we are to be intromitted by death, that it is enough for all that can be in any possibility to partake in it; so that the abounding plenitude of no one's portion can be any diminution to another's. The kind and nature of material, sensible good, hath a remarkable and most agreeable affinity to what is said, and what, upon very strict inquiry, one knows not how not to say, of matter itself, that it is perpetually divisible; but so as that every part and particle is still less and less. Whereupon it cannot but be, that whatsoever any enjoy of terrene good, so much is detracted from the rest. Of intellectual, spiritual good, knowledge, wisdom, grace, glory, the case is quite different. Let any possess never so much, it nothing diminishes another's possession in the same kind. If another man be never so wise, good, or happy, it takes nothing from me; I may be as wise, good, and happy; at least that hinders not but I may.

How pleasant a contemplation is this! that in the vast and numberless regions of light, bliss, and glory, the blessed inhabitants are all drawing from the same fountain; solacing themselves in that fulness of joy, drinking in from those rivers of

* Rom. xiv. 17. † Ps. xxxiv. 8.

pleasure that flow from the divine presence for evermore; all deriving, unto satiety, from that fulness that filleth all in all!

8. Preference of the society with holy ones in the heavenly state, above any to be enjoyed on earth. The words, as to their most obvious sense, seem to be full of this. With whom I would live, with him I would die. Is not this our common sense? Not that we can apprehend any thing in the very act, or article of dying, that can make dying with one more desirable than with another; but it must be meant of what is to follow. We would not have death to part us. We would enjoy one another after death, but so as we did not before. It is very probable our Lord and his disciples had formerly enjoyed pleasant hours with Lazarus, in his own house. But why doth Thomas, therefore, desire they might die to be with him? Excepting him, he might still have enjoyed the same society on earth, and of many other Christian friends besides. But we see his proposal concerned not himself only. It is, "Let us go die with him." He reckoned they should all die, and be with him together. And that the state they should then be in, would have, in point of society and conversation, such advantages above what their present state afforded, as were worth dying for.

And how can we but apprehend the vast difference? Whatever delight good men on earth have had in one another's society, they must then be better company than ever. How hard is it now to communicate our sentiments! We know not what our ways of converse shall hereafter be, but we know that such words as we now use are very slow, defective media of conveying our minds and sense to one another. What a difficulty do we now find, if we apprehend a thing clearly ourselves, to make another master of our notions! What circumlocutions do we need! What explications, to make another understand our meaning! And then those explications need further explication, and so we run ourselves into new difficulties, and entangle one another more and more. Most of our controversies arise from our mistaking one another's sense, though too often those mistakes are wilful, with them who love strife more than truth; and it is industriously endeavoured to pervert each other's words, and put senses upon them quite besides or against our true intent. But if we speak and hear with the greatest candour and sincerity that is possible, we are frequently not understood aright, either through the unskilfulness of him that speaks to choose the aptest words and forms of speech, or unattentiveness, incapacity, and dulness, in them that hear: frequently from both together. Hence is the conversation of Christians so little edifying, though they discourse of useful subjects; which, God knows, there is little of amongst us! Though much more than

is commonly apprehended proceeds from want of love, that should let us into one another's minds and hearts.

Our very sermons, when we study to make important things as plain as we can, are lost upon the most. Though here we see the advantage of a people's having a love to their minister, which is a mighty orator within themselves, and will make them endeavour to take in his heart and soul; as on his part, his love to them will make him willing, as we heard from the apostle, to impart, with the gospel, his own soul.* But as to Christian converse in this our present state, besides the difficulty of understanding one another, all even of them who have great treasures of knowledge in them are not alike conversable and communicative, nor any at all times. The dearest friends often find one another indisposed, otherwise busy, morose, sour, and out of humour; apt to take, and perhaps to give offence, on one hand and the other. And whereas we should most intimately converse with ourselves; upon the mentioned accounts, we are now very often the worst company that can be to ourselves, through the darkness, confusion, intricacy, and incoherence of our own thoughts; the fervour and tumultuation of ill affections, and the sluggishness and drowsy torpor of good. And in what case are we to please others by our converse, that have so much cause to be always, in a very great degree, displeased with ourselves?

When death shall have disencumbered, and set us free from all sorts of distempers, and brought us into the state of perfect and perfected spirits, how delectable will that society be; when all shall be full of divine light, life, love and joy; and freely communicate, as they have received freely! How pleasant will it be, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God! To converse with angels! Those wise, kind creatures, so full of profound knowledge and benignity; instructed by long, uninterrupted experience and observation of the methods of the divine government and dispensation; highly pleased with our accession to the general assembly, that rejoiced in the conversion of a sinner, whereby but one was hereafter in due time to be added, much more in the glorification of so many, that are now actually added to them! What delightful communings will there be of the mysteries of nature, of the methods of providence, of the wonders of grace, of the deep and hidden counsels of God, in what part it shall be agreeable to his wisdom and good pleasure, to let them appear and stand in view.

The conferences at the transfiguration made the transported disciples say, "it is good to be here;" when the glory, which while

* 1 Thess. ii. 8.

it oppressed, pleased them; though this was but a transient v w. But above all that is conceivable in that other state, how delectable will their society be in worship, in their unanimous adoration of the ever-blessed God, Father, Son, and Spirit! In how pleasant eternal raptures of delight and praise will all those excellent creatures be, that inhabit and replenish the vast realms of light and bliss; when all behold how the several kinds of being, light, life, excellency and perfection, by a perpetual efflux spring from the first, the Fountain of all being, the Parent of so glorious and so numerous a progeny, all God-like, and bearing the bright image of their Father! O the inexpressible pleasure of this consociation in worship, perpetually tendered with so absolute a plenitude of satisfaction in the dueness of it! and the gustful apprehension of what those words import, "Worthy art thou, O Lord!" each one relishing his own act, with just self-approbation and high delight; heightened by their apprehended perfect unanimity, and that there is among them no dissenting vote. Whence it cannot be but to worship God in spirit and truth, must be to enjoy him. And that he is under no other notion the more satisfying object of our enjoyment, than as he is the object of our worship. What room or pretence is there now left for unwillingness to die, on the account of relatives we have been wont to converse with in this world; when such an exchange as this is to be made by dying? But,—

II. We are also to consider, There might be an intermixture in the temper of this good man's spirit, when he uttered these words, of somewhat faulty and blameable: which we are to be cautioned against.

1. There might be too little consideration had of the dignity and value of human life; of which the great God takes so particular care, to guard and sustain it, both by law and providence: and of this creature man, so noble a part of divine workmanship, and whom he set over all the works of his hands in this lower world. To propound throwing away at once so many such lives, seems somewhat too precipitant.

2. The words seem not to savour enough of that deference which is due to the God of our lives; whose prerogative it is to kill and to make alive; to measure our time, and number our days. It might have been said, at least, If God will, &c.

3. There might be in them too little gratitude for the mercies of life, or patience of the difficulties of it: somewhat like that of Jonah, "Take now, I beseech thee, my life from me."

4. Too little regard to the business of life. It might have been more at leisure considered,—is the business done I was born for? Their special business who were to be the apostles of our Lord, already called, (Matt. x. 1, &c.,) and instructed in

great part of the work of their calling, was apparently too little considered, especially how, or for what, his Lord was to die himself, so far as either from his own words, or from the prophets, might have been collected.

5. Nor, perhaps, enough, how awful a thing it was to die, to change states, and pass into eternity! This might, upon this account, be too hastily said. Good old Simeon seemed to have considered the matter more, when he said, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," &c.

6. And there is reason to apprehend, in these words, too much displicency at the providence of God, in taking away such a man now in such a time; with some appearance of despondency concerning the Christian interest. This Lazarus is thought to have been a wealthy man, though he in the parable is represented otherwise. Christianity was, as yet, a little thing in the world. Our Lord had signalized himself by his wonderful works, and drawn many eyes upon him, that were at a gaze; but his heavenly doctrine, and the true design of his coming, had entered into the minds of but a few, and they of the meaner sort. "Had any of the rulers believed on him?" It was yet a dubious twilight, the dawning of the morning. The Spirit that was to convince the world was not yet given, for Jesus was not yet glorified.* Nicodemus, a rabbi, came to him, but by night. This cause, as still, according to human estimate, depended much on reputation. Men loved (till an over-powering influence bore down all before it) the praise of men more than the praise of God;† and believed not, because they sought honour one of another.‡

It was, now, a mighty loss, to have one such man drop, that lived so near Jerusalem, where our Lord's great work did much lie, but where he chose not to lodge: this was in Bethany, but two miles off, a convenient retreat. The master of the house is himself dislodged: and whereas, though "the foxes had holes, and the birds nests, the Son of man had not where to lay his head;"§ this disciple might probably think, Where shall be our next resort? Where is there a considerable person to be found, that will hereafter give us harbour and countenance? He might hence be induced even to utter his *conclamatum est;* "it is past all hope:" and to this purpose say, Now he is dead, let us all go die with him. Their Lord and Master had before told them of his being ere long to be taken from them; and that his followers must count upon taking up their cross daily. And what, might he think, is to become of us, upon whom, left desolate, the stress is to lie of the Christian cause? What storms will be raised against us, whose province it must be to plant and propagate a new religion in the world; the tenderest

* John vii. 39, *ch.* xvi. 8. † *Ch.* xii. 43. ‡ *Ch.* v. 44. § Luke ix. 58.

concern in all the world, and about which men are most apt to be enraged at any attempt of innovation! And by us, unlearned, uninterested, obscure, and contemptible men! By what he here says, he seems not afraid to die; but he seems afraid to live and face the storm, and contend with the difficulties of that even hopeless undertaking, which he perceived himself and his companions designed unto. Rather than this, he seems to apprehend a present death was to be chosen.

And I, now, no way doubt, but any serious person that shall be at the pains to commune with himself, will judge there may be such quick turns of thoughts this way; and that, as those opposite senses of this passage do import the variety and contrariety of principles that are in us, in this imperfect state, makes it no impossible thing, but that, amidst the various agitations of a musing mind, somewhat of grace, and somewhat of sin;—yea, much of a holy and heavenly temper, with some degree of incogitancy, haste, and faulty distemper, might be vented together in such an expression.

And now for the use of it, we must have distinct respect to both these sorts of sense, which the words may admit of. And,—

1. For whatsoever of good sense they have in them, let us endeavour to have it deeply impressed, and inwrought into our souls. So far as, upon good and self-justifying accounts, one may wish to die with another, eminently holy and good, let us labour to be in that temper of spirit, that with all reverential submission to the wise, holy, and sovereign will of God, we may ever be ready to go with the first: a good man should need only leave to die. Consider, are we so loose from all worldly enjoyments and designs, as to be capable, when a holy man dies, of adopting these words, "Let me die with him?" Will they fit our spirits? Can we so far comport with them, as to avow it with a heart not reproaching us, that it is only obedience to the supreme Ruler, not terrene inclination, that makes us willing to survive such as we see going off this stage before us?—that if He, in whose hands our breath is, will have us still live, we can submit with patience; if he signify his mind we shall die, we can comply with gladness? But,—

Do we find it otherwise? Doth the bent of our own spirits urge and press us downward, and fix us to earth? Are we so within its magnetism? We have a worse evil to fear than bodily death. To be so carnally minded is death, in a far more horrid sense. This temper of mind, to prefer an earthly abode before the purity and bliss of the heavenly society is so repugnant to the most constituent principles of a living Christian; his faith of the unseen world, his delight in God, his love of the divine presence, and converse with the Father and Son in glory, his hatred

of sin, and desire of perfect holiness; that he should rather take another name than wear that of a Christian in conjunction with the allowance of so unchristian a spirit; a temper that tends to subvert whole Christianity, and puts a man into a posture of hostility against the cross of Christ, and the very design of his dying. For in contradistinction to them whose conversation is in heaven, from whence they look for the Saviour, are they become the declared enemies of the cross, who mind earthly things;* preferring an earthly before the heavenly state. And the apostle, tells such (weeping, as he wrote), that their end will be destruction. This I must therefore say, and testify in the Lord, that if any will indulge themselves in such a temper of spirit, and whosoever goes, even of the most excellent of God's saints and ministers, they would (because they love the present world more) stay with the last; as to such, our preaching is vain, and their faith is vain. But if there have been any within the compass of your knowledge and acquaintance, of whom dying, or lately dead, you could say, Let me die with him, or die to be with him, of whom would you rather say it than of the excellent Dr. Bates?

But do you expect I should give you a distinct and full account of him? Many of you know, or may easily apprehend, I have not been in circumstances by which it could be so much as possible to me. The surprising, overwhelming tidings of his death, with the signification of my being expected to do this part, first reached me, by just estimate, at about two hundred miles' distance. Nor did any thing to that purpose, from such as were concerned, come to my hands till a fortnight after his decease. At my return, towards the end of the week preceding this sad solemnity, I had my own charge, from which I had been long absent, to provide for against the Lord's day; after which only one day intervened, wherein thoughts that accompanied me in my way, were to be reduced into some order. But had I had never so much time and leisure, I cannot but reflect on what was said of that famous Roman, to give the just praises of Cicero, *Cicerone laudatore opus fuerit.*† "There was need of Cicero himself to be the encomiast." No man knows how to speak becomingly of the excellencies of Dr. Bates, that hath not the eloquence of Dr. Bates! He did that office most laudably for divers others, for those reverend and truly great men, Dr. Manton, Mr. Clarkson, Dr. Jacomb, and the admirable Mr. Baxter. But now there is no man left to do it suitably for him, *i. e.* that both is fit and willing. So that this part comes to be devolved upon the unfittest among many.

Yet thus, while others have declined it, out of a modest opinion of its being above them, whose abilities, and convenien-

* Phil. iii. 18, 19, 20. † Levius.

cies for the performance, did much more concur; this looks like an art and contrivance of Providence, to greaten him the more, that every one reckons him too great for their commendation: and that, consequently, he is to pass out of our world as one too big for our praises, with no encomium, or that which is next to none.

Though I first had the opportunity, and great pleasure, of his acquaintance, above forty years ago, yet I have no present way, while I am writing this, of knowing, or recollecting with certainty, any thing of the earlier days of his life. As therefore the case is, the little I shall say of him shall be, not by way of history, but of character. Nor in giving somewhat of that, can I well omit,—to take notice of, what must with every one come first in view, *viz.* his self-recommending aspect, composed of gravity and pleasantness, with the graceful mien, and comeliness of his person. That was said upon no slight consideration of the nature of man, from unbribed common estimate, that whatever a man's virtuous endowment be, it is the more taking and acceptable, as coming, *è pulchro corpore*, "from a handsome, well-framed body." God had designed him to circumstances, and a station, not obscure in the world, and had accordingly formed him with advantage; so that his exterior, and first aspectable part, might draw respect. And though the treasure to be lodged there was to be put into an earthen vessel, yet even that was wrought, *meliore luto*, of finer, or more accurately figured and better turned clay. He was to stand before kings;* you know in what relation he stood to one, as long as was convenient, for some purposes; and how frequent occasion he had of appearing (never unacceptably) before another. His concern lay not only with "mean men,"† though he could tell also how to condescend to the meanest. His aspect and deportment was not austere, but both decently grave and amiable, such as might command at once both reverence and love; and was herein not a lying, but the true, picture of his mind.

I may (to this purpose) borrow his own words (and whose could I more rightfully borrow, or to so much advantage?) concerning that excellent person, Alderman Ashhurst, whose fragrant memory will long survive the age he lived in: and O that his example might govern in London as long as his name lasts! Of him the doctor says, "A constant serenity reigned in his countenance, the visible sign of the divine calm in his breast; 'the peace of God that passeth all understanding!'"‡ And who could have said this but Dr. Bates? Or so appositely have applied what had a higher author? So expressively, so fully, so

* Prov. xxii. 29. † Ibid.

† Epistle to the Funeral Sermon for Mr. Benjamin Ashhurst, dedicated to Sir Henry.

truly, and justly was it spoken! But also, of whom could this have been more fitly said, *mutato nomine*, than of Dr. Bates? How rarely should we see a countenance so constant, and so faithful an index of an undisturbed, composed mind! Through that, if we look into this, how rich furniture of the inner man should we soon perceive and admire!

His natural endowments and abilities appeared to every observer, great, much beyond the common rate: his apprehension quick and clear: his reasoning faculty acute, prompt, and expert; so as readily and aptly to produce, and urge closely, the stronger and more pregnant arguments, when he was to use them; and soon to discern the strength of arguments, if he was to answer them: his judgment penetrating and solid, stable and firm: his wit never vain or light, but most facetious and pleasant, by the ministry of a fancy, both very vigorous and lively; and most obedient to his reason; always remote both from meanness and enormity. His memory was admirable, and never failed, that any one could observe, not impaired by his great age of seventy-four: insomuch, that speeches made upon solemn occasions, of no inelegant composition, (some whereof the world hath seen, though extorted from him with great difficulty and by much importunity) he could afterwards repeat to a word, when he had not penned one word of them before. And his sermons, wherein nothing could be more remote from ramble, he constantly delivered from his memory; and hath sometime told me, with an amicable freedom, that he partly did it, to teach some that were younger to preach without notes. His learning, and acquired knowledge of things, usually reckoned to lie within that compass, was a vast treasure. He had lived a long, studious life; an earnest gatherer, and (as the phrase is) devourer of books;* with which he had so great an acquaintance, and they that were acquainted with him so well knew it, that one, who was for the dignity of his station, and the eminency of his endowments, as great a pillar and as excellent an ornament of the church as any it hath had for many an age, hath been known to say, that were he to collect a library, he would as soon consult Dr. Bates as any man he knew. He was, indeed, himself a living one.

He knew how to choose, and was curious in his choice. Whatsoever belonged to the finer and more polite sort of literature, was most grateful to him; when it fell into a conjunction with what was also most useful. Nothing mean was welcome into his library, or detained there, much less thought fit to be entertained and laid up in the more private repository of his mind. To speak of the particular parts of his learning wherein he excelled, were to trifle, when there are so many visible

* Helluo.

effects extant that enough inform the world. His divine knowledge, and the abundant grace of God in him, have been eminently conspicuous the same way, in great part; but otherwise also. For his private conversation was so instructive, so quickening, in reference to what lay within the confines of religion and godliness, that no man of ordinary capacity could hear his usual and most familiar discourses, but either with great negligence or great advantage.

When he hath been to consider a case of conscience, I have sometimes had opportunity to observe, with what wisdom, what caution, what tenderness, he hath spoken to it, and with what compass of thought; turning it round this way and that; most strictly regarding our sacred rule, and weighing all circumstances that concerned the case:—but withal, taking occasion from thence, (when the persons concerned have not been present) to magnify and adore the grace of God, which he would do most pathetically and with great affection, for keeping us out of the way of temptation; which he thought was too little considered by christians; and thereby saving us from the entanglements and perplexities of spirit, as well as from the scandals that befell many. I never knew any more frequent and affectionate in the admiration of divine grace, upon all occasions, than he was; or who had a deeper sense of the impotency and pravity of human nature.

His discourses were usually (as our rule directs) savoury, as seasoned with salt, and such as might minister grace to the hearers. He was frequently visited by persons of higher rank, and that made no mean figure in the world: of whom, some have acknowledged that going abroad upon hazardous employments, they have received from him such wise and pious counsels as have stuck by them, and they have been the better for afterwards. Though in his communing with the many friends whom he irresistibly constrained to covet his most desirable society, he did not exclude the things that were of common human concernment, he still discovered a temper of mind most intent upon divine things. He did not look with a slight or careless eye upon the affairs of the public; but consider, and speak of them as a man of prospect and large thought, with much prudence and temper; not curiously prying into the arcana of government, or reasons of state, which it was necessary should be under a veil; much less rudely censuring what it was not fit should be understood: but what was open to common view, he was wont to discourse of instructively, both as lying under the direction of Providence, and as relating to the interest of religion.

Nor was he wont to banish out of his conversation, the pleasantness that fitly belonged to it; for which his large acquaint-

ance with a most delightful variety of story, both ancient and modern, gave him advantage beyond most; his judicious memory being a copious promptuary of what was profitable and facetious, and disdaining to be the receptacle of useless trash. To place religion in a morose sourness was remote from his practice, his judgment, and his temper. But his discourses, taking in often things of a different nature, were interwoven with religion, and centred in it; especially such things as were most intimate and vital to it: of those things he was wont to speak with that savour and relish, as plainly showed he spake not forcedly, or with affectation, as acting a part; but from the settled temper and habit of his soul. Into what transports of admiration of the love of God have I seen him break forth, when some things foreign, or not immediately relating, to practical godliness, had taken up a good part of our time. How easy a step did he make of it from earth to heaven! Such as have been wont, in a more stated course, to resort to him, can tell, whether, when other occasions did fall in, and claim their part in the discourses of that season, he did not usually send them away with somewhat that tended to better their spirits, and quicken them in their way heavenward? With how high flights of thought and affection was he wont to speak of the heavenly state; even like a man much more of kin to that other world than to this! And for his ministerial qualifications and labours, do I need to say any thing to themselves who had the benefit thereof? Either them, who have so many years lived under his most fruitful, enlightening, quickening, edifying ministry; whether week by week, as his beloved, peculiarly privileged charge at Hackney, that mournful, desolate people! who have been fed with the heavenly, hidden manna, and with the fruits of the tree of life that grows in the midst of the paradise of God, so prepared and presented to them, and made pleasant to their taste, as few besides have ever had; but now sit in sorrow, hopeless of full, or any equal relief, but by transportation into that paradise itself, whence all their refections were wont to come? Or do I need to inform such inhabitants of London, as in a doubled, three-monthly course have for many years, in throng-assembly, been wont to hang upon his lips, to whose, if to any one's in our days, the characters belonged, of the wise,* and the righteous man's lips, which are said to disperse knowledge, and (which is therefore most agreeable) to feed many? Or can it be needful to acquaint the world, who have volumes of his discourses, or sermons in their hands; or tell them of their singular excellencies who can as well tell me? I can speak to none of his great worth and accomplishments, as a richly furnished, and most skilful dispenser of divine know-

* Prov. xv. 7; x. 7.

ledge, and of the mysteries of the gospel of Christ, an instructed scribe, able to "bring forth of his treasury things new and old;" but who may say to me, as those Samaritan christians, We believe him to be such; not because of thy saying, for we have heard (or read) him ourselves. And they may say so with judgment upon this proof, that shall consider both the select, choice, and most important matter of his tractates and sermons, published or unpublished, and the peculiar way and manner of his tractation thereof.

For the former:—the choice of subjects, and of such materials of discourse as are to be reduced and gathered into them, discovers as much of the judgment, spirit, and design of the compiler, as any thing we can think of. When we consider what sort of things a man's mind hath been exercised and taken up about, through so long a course and tract of time; we may see what things he counted great, important, necessary to be insisted on, and most conducing to the ends which one of his calling and station ought to design and aim at; and are thereupon to appeal to ourselves, whether he did not judge and design aright, and as he ought? As what could be of greater importance, than to discover the harmony of God's attributes, in the work of saving sinners? the final happiness of man? the four last things? &c. What more important than that of spiritual perfection? Which last he dropped, as Elijah his mantle, when he was to ascend into that state most perfectly perfect, wherein that which he had been discoursing of finally terminates. Read it, and invocate the Lord God of Elijah, saying, "Where is he?" Nor were his discourses of less consequence, that in his stated course, he delivered to his constant hearers. They were always much allied to the lamp, and did not need to fear the brightest light. His last sermon in this place, (who of us thought it the last! hearing it delivered with so much life and spirit?) challenges our re-consideration over and over. It was about sins against knowledge, from Luke xii. 47, a warning to the age, uttered (though not faintly) as with his dying breath. O that it could have reached ears and hearts, as far as the concern of it doth reach! The sins of our days, of professors and of others, are more generally sins against knowledge than heretofore, and may make us expect and dread the more stripes that text speaks of.

As for his manner and way of handling what he undertook, we may use the words which he recites from the incomparable Bishop Wilkins concerning Mr. Baxter; which, no doubt, if there had then been the occasion, he would have judged not unapplicable here also:—That he cultivated every subject he handled, and had he lived in the age of the fathers, he would have been one. His method, in all his discourses, might be

exposed to the most critical censurer. What could be more accurate! And for his style, it was even inimitably polite and fine: but to him so natural, that it was more uneasy to have used a coarser style, than to others so neat a one as his was. Nor is it to be thought strange, that there should be in this, a peculiarity; style being to any man, as appropriate upon the matter, as his visage or voice: and as immediately depending on the temper of the mind, in conjunction with fancy, as that is, more or less, brisk, lively, and vigorous; as the others do on the complexion of the body, or the disposition of the organs of speech. They that would in this case attempt to force nature, would, I suspect, be very awkward at it, would bungle scurvily, and soon find they had better be content to creep on all-fours, than aim to fly and soar with borrowed wings, or stolen feathers. If God, with a man's nature, gives a disposition of this kind, it may, in his younger years, admit of innocent improvement: but that which is most peculiar to any, in this respect, is what one insensibly slides into, with no more design than one hath to walk after this or that manner; by which yet many persons are known, and distinguishable from other men.

But I doubt not, that excellency in any such kind, as hath been anciently observed of poetry and oratory, must have its foundation in nature; and they that will strive against that stream, will soon perceive that such proverbial sayings were grounded upon prudent observation and long experience, that a Mercury is not to be made of every log; and that nothing is to be attempted *invitâ Minervâ*, or "against one's genius and natural inclination." Therefore that monition, *lege historiam, ne fias historia*, one may vary and say, *Cave, &c.* "Take heed of a proverb, lest thou become a proverb." That is easy and pleasant which is natural.* And now when the grace of God supervenes, and doth exalt and sublimate nature, it makes that mean beginning, and its progress into use and custom, which is said to be a second nature, subservient to very high and excellent purposes; as is eminently conspicuous in the doctor's peculiar way of preaching and writing: especially in his frequent, most apt similitudes and allusions, to be attributed to a brisk and vivid fancy, regulated by judgment, and sanctified by divine grace, so as greatly to serve his pious purpose, to illustrate the truth he designed to recommend, and give it the greatest advantage of entering into the mind with light and pleasure; and at once both to instruct and delight his reader or hearer. And so much more grateful have his illustrations been, by how much the more they have been surprising, and remote from any forethought in them that read, or heard. And I may here freely put his most constant attentive hearers upon recollecting, whether he

* Πᾶν φυσικὸν ἡδύ.

have not usually pleased them by surprising them? (for I know there are surprisals ungrateful enough;) and in most sermons, whether they did not meet with what they did not expect from him; and might in vain have expected from any body else?

Some, it is possible, may find fault with that in this kind, to which they can do nothing like themselves; who yet, I hope, may admit of conviction of their own fault herein, by gentler means, than by being put in mind of the fable. They might upon the matter as well find fault that God had made him a taller man than the most, perhaps than themselves; or of a more comely complexion, or that all were not of one stature, size, or feature. If any do, it is most probably such, to whom one may truly say, they blame what they could not mend, nor he help; at least, without much pain to himself, and to no purpose. One may venture to say, that in that fine way of expressing himself, which was become habitual to him, he much more pleased others than himself. For in the excellent Mr. Baxter he highly commends much another way, saying of him, "He had a marvellous felicity and copiousness in speaking. There was a noble negligence in his style: for his great mind could not stoop to the affected eloquence of words."* Very excellent men excel in different ways: the most radiant stones may differ in colour, when they do not in value.

His judgment in ecclesiastical matters, was to be known by his practice; and it was such, that he needed not care who knew it. He was for entire union of all visible christians, (or saints, or believers, which in scripture are equivalent terms) meaning by Christianity, what is essential thereto, whether doctrinal, or practical; as by humanity we mean what is essential to man, severing accidents as not being of the essence; and by visibility, the probable appearance thereof: and for free communion of all such, of whatsoever persuasion in extra-essential matters, if they pleased. And this design he vigorously pursued, as long as there was any hope; desisting when it appeared hopeless, and resolving to wait till God should give a spirit suitable hereto; from an apprehension that when principles on all hands were so easily accommodable, and yet that there was with too many a remaining insuperable reluctancy to the thing itself, God must work the cure, and not man: accounting also, in the mean time, that, notwithstanding misrepresentations, it was better to cast a mantle over the failings of brethren, than be concerned to detect and expose them; knowing that if we be principally solicitous for the name of God, he will in his own way and time take care of ours. And in this sentiment he was not alone.

But now is this great luminary, this burning and shining light, (not extinct, but) gone out of our horizon. We, for a season

* In his funeral sermon, p. 90.

rejoiced in this light, and are we not to mourn for its disappearance? Yet not without hope. O! the unconceivable loss of his domestical relatives, who, in respect of his most private capacity and conversation, are deprived of such a head, father, and guide! Yet in this lies their advantage, that since nothing that is mortal can fill up his room, they are under a necessity to betake themselves thither, where the surest and fullest relief is to be had: having in the mean time among mortals, a far greater number of fellow-sufferers and fellow-mourners, to bear a part with them in their sorrows, and ready to afford them all suitable consolation, than most in this world can be capable of expecting in such a case. Let those of his own peculiar charge, let those that were wont, though not so often, in a stated course, to hear him in this place, with all other his more occasional hearers, mourn, that they are to hear no more his weighty sentences, his sweet honey-dropping words: let them mourn that never heard to purpose, that were never allured, never won, that were always deaf to this charmer, though charming so wisely. Let those that have got good by him mourn, that in this way they are to get no more; those that have got none, that they have lost so much of their day; that they are to be addressed by this persuasive advocate for Christ and their own souls no more. Let his brethren, all of us, mourn, that we have lost so prudent, so humble, so instructive, so encouraging a guide, so bright an ornament from among us.

But let none of us mourn without hope. God will be a husband to the widow trusting in him, and the father of the fatherless, taking God in Christ for their father and their God. He hath not forgot the titles he hath assumed. He can also find, or make, for his widowed church, a pastor after his own heart: and the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, that gave his life for the sheep, though he was dead, is alive, and lives for evermore. All his hearers, though they are no more to hear his pleasant human voice sounding in their ears, if they attend and listen, may hear a divine voice crying after them, "This is the way, walk in it." And let them know that the gospel he preached is immortal, and never dies, though all flesh is grass: and his own books, though he is dead, yet speak. We, his brethren, were to follow him, as he followed Christ; who will himself be with us always to the end. The work wherein he was engaged, was common to him and us. Herein if we follow him, though not with equal steps, faithfully endeavouring to turn many to righteousness, we shall shine as he doth, like the stars in the firmament; we need not be solicitous, though not with equal lustre; as one star differs from another in glory.*

The cause wherein he was engaged unto his death, and from

* 1 Cor. xv. 41.

which no offered emoluments or dignities could ever draw him, was not that of a party; for he was of none; and was of too large a mind to be of any, but that noble cause of union and communion with all christians that hold the Head. That cause is not dead with him. Now that he is dead, we are to say, as that is the voice of the Christian faith, of divine and brotherly love, "Let us die with him;" but not as it is the voice of despondency or despair. Let us covet to be with him in that blessed state, the reality whereof we believe, and of which our faith is to be to us the substance and evidence.

I know no good man that knowing him, would not say, Let me die with him. I very well know who would; and, if breasts could be laid open to inspection as by a glass, do know in whose breast this sense would be found, engraven as with the point of a diamond,—O! that my soul were in his soul's stead; or if the supreme Disposer had thought fit, or seen an equal fitness for translation, that I had died with him. But, knowing his much greater usefulness in this world, O! that I had died for him. For since it is expressly said, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren,* a life that could regularly and effectually have redeemed his, had been laid down for many, in that one of holy, prudent, heavenly Dr. Bates. This is the sense of one not weary, blessed be God, of the business of life, and that enjoys as much of the comforts of life as any man can reasonably wish, scarce any one more. But it must be confessed, as this world was not worthy of this servant of Christ, it is become far less worthy now so excellent a person hath left it. His love, his converse, was pleasant beyond what can be expressed! It is now a grievance not to have a part with the silent mourners, when lamentations could freely have been poured forth, without noise or interruption! As the case is, necessity lays a restraint, and leaves it an easier thing to die than weep out; otherwise can one be shy, in a way that can admit it, to tell the world, that to live in it, now he is dead out of it, much less deserves the name of life! It can be felt, that those words among the many divine raptures of that holy man,† have a most perceptible meaning:—

> "When I got health, thou tookest away my life;
> And more,—for my friends die."

If one may innocently borrow words from so impure a mouth, they are very expressive; "I scarce count myself a man, when without Jamblichus."‡

Here were two souls knit together as the soul of one man! What there is of present separation shall be but for a little while. And by how much the separation is more grievous, the re-union will be with the stronger propension, and the more delightful,

* 1 John iii. 16. † Herbert. ‡ Julian. Epist. ad Jambl.—*ἀν—μὴ συνῶ.*

everlasting cohesion. As also separation from this terrene clog will be much the easier: one great weight is added above, to pulley up what ought to ascend thither. How can that but be a blessed state, into which He that is essential love hath caught up such a man; one in so great part transformed before into the same likeness, and fitted to dwell in love! And accordingly God took him, even kissed away his soul, as hath been said of those great favourites of heaven; did let him die without being sick; vouchsafed him that great privilege, which a good man would choose before many, not to outlive serviceableness: to live till one be weary of the world, not till the world be weary of him! Thus he prayed wisely, thus God answered graciously.

But be it far from us to say, "Let us die with him," as despairing of our cause; if our cause be not that of any self-distinguished party, but truly that common Christian cause, of which you have heard. While it is the divine pleasure to continue us here, let us be content and submit to live and own it, to live and serve it, to our uttermost. If ever God design good days to the Christian church on earth, this is the cause that must prevail and triumph in a glorious conquest over death. But I must freely tell you my apprehensions, which I have often hinted, that I fear it must die first; I mean a temporary death:—I fear it, for it hath been long gradually dying already; and spiritual diseases which have this tendency, are both sinful and penal. Lazarus' death and resurrection, I think to have been meant for a sort of prolusion to the death and resurrection of Christ, both personal, but mystical. I only say this for illustration, not for proof. That sickness and death of his, was not in order to a permanent death, but for the glory of God, that when the case was deplorate and hopeless, and he four days buried, he might surprisingly spring up again alive. I know not but the sickness and death of this our incomparably worthy friend, and (for aught I know of many more of us) may be appointed the same way to be for the glory of God; that is, as tending to introduce that death which is to pass upon our common cause; which such men help to keep alive, by their earnest strugglings, though in a languishing, fainting condition every hour.

Think me not so vain as to reckon exclusively the cause of dissenters, the cause I now speak of; no, no, I speak of the common cause of all serious, sober-minded Christians, within the common rule or without it. I neither think any one party to include all sobriety of mind, or to exclude all insobriety. But I apprehend converting work to be much at a stand, within the pales that men have set up, severing one party from another, and without them. Few are any where brought home to God through Christ. And God knows too few design it, otherwise than to make proselytes to their several parties; and this is

thought a glorious conversion. Serious piety and Christianity languish every where. Many that have a name to live are dead and putrified, already stink; common justice and righteousness are fled from among us. Sincerely good and pious men die away in the natural sense apace. You know if deaths and burials should, in the weekly bills, exceed births and other accessions to the city, whither this tends. When so many great lights are withdrawn, both such as were within the national church constitution, and such as were without it; is there no danger God should also remove the candlestick?

Our obduration and insensible stupidity portends a deadly darkness to be drawing on. And must such lives go, to make a way for God's anger; and lead on a more general and more dreadful approaching death? "O that God would rend the heavens and come down!" He may yet melt our hearts, and make them flow at his presence, notwithstanding their mountainous, rocky height and hardness. This may be the means of saving some souls, and of deferring the common calamity. A great thing it would be to have it deferred. What a privilege would many servants of Christ count it, not to live to the day when the Spirit of the living God shall be generally retired and gone; and atheism, scepticism, infidelity, worldliness, and formality, have quite swallowed up our religion? While such men as we have lost, lived, they did, and such do, as instruments, keep somewhat of serious religion alive, under our several forms, but as ready to expire. But though it should seem generally to have expired, let us believe it shall revive. When our confidences and vain boasts cease, "The temple of the Lord!—The temple of the Lord!—Lo, here is Christ, and there is Christ;" and one sort ceases to magnify this church, and another that, and a universal death is come upon us; then (and I am afraid, not till then) is to be expected a glorious resurrection, not of this or that party, for living, powerful religion, when it recovers, will disdain the limits of a party. Nor is it to be thought that religion, modified by the devised distinctions of this or that party, will ever be the religion of the world. But the same power that makes us return into a state of life, will bring us into a state of unity, in divine light and love. Then will all the scandalous marks and means of division among Christians vanish; and nothing remain as a test or boundary of Christian communion, but what hath its foundation, as such, in plain reason, or express revelation. Then, as there is one body and one Spirit, will that Almighty Spirit so animate and form this body, as to make it every where amiable, self-recommending, and capable of spreading and propagating itself, and to increase with the increase of God. Then shall the Lord be one, and his name one, in all the earth.

A FUNERAL SERMON,

FOR THAT VERY REVEREND AND MOST LABORIOUS SERVANT OF CHRIST, IN THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY,

MR. MATTHEW MEAD,

WHO DECEASED OCTOBER 16, 1699.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN AND FRANCES,

THE

LORD AND LADY HAVERSHAM.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOURS,

THE request of the mournful widow and other relatives of the worthy person deceased, concurring with my own inclination, left with me no room to deliberate concerning this inscription. I easily apprehend how quick and deep a sense you both have of the loss of such another valuable person from off this earth; having so lately borne your part, in lamenting the decease of one you much valued also. Upon which account I put into your hands a discourse on those words, (John xi. 16,) "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Such persons leave this world so fast, that it grows a more difficult choice with whom to live, than with whom to die. When on that sad occasion I did set myself to consider that passage of holy Scripture, I had seen some expositors that made it a doubt whether that were meant of Lazarus, or of our Lord himself. Some of good note thought the latter: for which was plausibly to be alleged what we find verse 8, and that in verse 16, the words were spoken not to Christ, but to the fellow disciples. That doubt was not to have been moved in an assembly where was neither time nor a fit season to discuss it. And though I might more conveniently, I shall not say much to it now, only I judge that without necessity the present coherence was not to be torn; when by the series of discourse the same *him* seems plainly to be referred to, in the close of the 15th verse, and of this 16th.—"Lazarus is dead, (*v.* 14;) nevertheless, let us go to *him*, (*v.* 15;) let us also go, that we may die with *him*." It was little needful to say to Christ, "Let us go," whose mind appeared set upon going already; but to the disciples, who drew back. Besides that reverence might restrain from saying this to our Lord, when what was to be proposed was matter of hortation, not of inquiry. Though sometimes they feared even to ask him a question also; as Luke ix. 45. And they might the rather be now under a present awe, from the rebuke, or expostulatory answer he had given them, for

their objecting against going into Judea: especially so as not to signify a remaining fear which he had so newly checked. Therefore Thomas's speech, directed to his fellow disciples, but not out of Christ's hearing, (for we have no reason to suppose that he separated them from him, that he might say this to them apart) is so ordered, as not to import fear of death, but love to the deceased.

If any should object, that Thomas could not mean dying *with* Lazarus, when he was told he was already dead; that scarce deserves answer to any one that understands the latitude of the particle rendered *with*, especially that it frequently signifies *after*, and not always *with;* and very often notes nothing of time at all: and therefore may here mean no more than, "Let us go that we may die too, or die as well as he." All this I say, not that I have heard any person in our days object against, or plead for, this or that sense of these words; but knowing they have been differently understood; and this being the first opportunity I had to take public notice of the difference, I am not ill pleased that I have now this occasion of representing it to so competent judges, partly to prevent objection, or at least to show with what temper of mind any such different apprehensions, in matters of no greater moment, ought to be looked upon. Nor shall I here vie authorities of commentators that have gone this way, or that, in this matter. Therefore I name none; only some of as great name as any, have judged this the more probable opinion which I have followed.

Many instances might be given, wherein, when matters extra-essential to the sum of religion are delivered, one sense must be pitched upon, though another, very diverse, (of which there cannot be two) is not to be demonstrated impossible. In which case, I much prefer a tacit following that which one chooses, before a conceited confidence, and crying down of the other. For confident clamour neither admits light, nor tends to enlighten any body.

In the present case, it makes no difference to any disadvantage. For if we desire to be united in death, or in that state to which it introduces, with this or that holy man; to be with our blessed Lord in that state, must be much more desirable. But the departure of the excellent ones of the earth from it, leaves us less here of present attraction, and gives us a very threatening prospect and presage of what we are to expect for the future.

Your Lordship's great respect to this servant of Christ was even hereditary, and descended to him by you from your family, as I have often heard him acknowledge, with great sense of obligation. And, Madam, your Ladyship's great value of him, though it might take its first rise from so near and judicious a relative, could not but receive a great increase from his known worth, and your own discerning judgment. I pray, not doubting it, that with whatsoever kindness you have received any prophet, or other servant of Christ, in that name, you may have a proportionable reward; and am, my most honoured Lord and Lady,

Your most obliged, humble servant,

In the work of the gospel,

JOHN HOWE.

A FUNERAL SERMON.

1 Tim. iv. 16.

Thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.

These words I principally design to insist upon at this time, and on this sad and mournful occasion; but not without retrospection to the foregoing verse, and the former part of this; which runs thus, (*v.* 15,) "Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all: (*v.* 16,) take heed to thyself, and thy doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." This whole foregoing context contains precepts, which, reduced to practice, afford an eminent example and pattern of a true gospel preacher; or, as the words are, (*v.* 6,) "of a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine;" as these last words show the blessed end and issue of such a one's ministry; *i.e.* that he shall save himself, which must be looked upon as certain: and them that hear him; *i.e.* as much as in him lies he shall herein do his part, and what is incumbent upon him to the saving of his hearers. These latter words hold forth the *double end* which a minister of Christ is to pursue; the saving his own, and his people's souls. The foregoing words, considered in reference to these, contain the *proper means* he is to use in order to this twofold end; *i.e.* he is to meditate much on the great things of the gospel. He is to be wholly *in* them,* as the words literally import which we read, "He is to give himself wholly *to* them." He is to be continually increasing in the knowledge of God, and that so as not to know only to himself, but so as to make known what he knows. He is especially (though that be the common duty of Christians) to turn all "to the use of edifying, (Eph. iv. 29,) that his profiting may appear to all." For though Timothy was at this time a young man, yet the most grown did always need to be still growing. None have here attained their *ne plus*

* Ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι. In a better than the poet's sense, Scire tuum nihil est.

ultra, but may still write for their motto, *plus ultra*, all their days. Even Paul the aged, as he styles himself to Philemon, tells the Philippians, (both those epistles being dated from Rome, and supposed to be written about the same time, when he was first there) that he had not yet attained, in point of the transforming knowledge of Christ, *ch.* iii. 10, 11. And unto what pitch soever he grew, it was still in order to communication. He writes to the Corinthians, that he determined to know nothing among them,* which is so to know as to make known nothing but "Jesus Christ and him crucified:" and to the Ephesians, that he would have them understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ;† no doubt that their salvation might be promoted thereby. And hereupon, in great part, depends a minister's own salvation; as hereafter will further appear. But, besides, he is to take heed to himself, and see to the good state of his own soul; he is to take heed to his doctrine, not to corrupt, or handle deceitfully the word of God, but represent it sincerely, and as the truth is in Jesus. He is to continue in them; *i.e.* in the things he before exhorts him to meditate on, and be wholly in them; to continue in the faith of what was to be believed, and the practice of what was to be done; and in pressing and insisting on both: and all for the mentioned ends, that he might both save himself and those that hear him. And it is this twofold end of a minister's care and labour, that will take us up at this time. This is that, therefore, which, as God shall help, I am to evince and apply, *viz.* Doctrine—That a minister of Christ is to make it his business, both to save himself and his hearers. I am, as the text directs, to speak of these two ends conjunctly. And here I shall not spend time, or use a liberty beyond what is obvious and useful, in inquiring into the counsel of God, why he makes use of such in order to the saving of others, as need to be saved themselves also: but shall principally insist, that since it appears to be God's pleasure to make use of such, they should therefore most earnestly concern themselves, and be very intent upon carrying on this design, *viz.* of their own, conjunctly with that of their hearers', salvation. Yet, as to the former of these,—

I. Somewhat it may be requisite to say, concerning this course and method which we find the wisdom and good pleasure of God have pitched upon, for the carrying on a saving design in this world; to make use of such for the saving of others as do need to endeavour the saving of themselves. And here I shall briefly show;—how it is to be understood: and—how the fitness of this course may be evinced.

1. As to the former we shall briefly note, that we must be

* 1 Cor. ii. 2. † Eph. iii. 4.

cautious to understand aright, how, and in what sense any one can be said to save himself, or another. Therefore,—

(1.) It must be understood so, as to keep at a remote and awful distance from entrenching upon a divine prerogative: it being most expressly said, (Isa. xliii. 11,) "I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour:" and (*ch.* xlv. 21, 22,) "There is no God beside me, a just God and a Saviour, there is none beside me. Look to me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Which plainly signifies, that, in the highest sense, to save is most appropriate to Deity, especially with an everlasting salvation, as it is expressed, (*ch.* xlv. 17,) "Israel shall be saved in, or by, the Lord, with an everlasting salvation;" and that to be so a Saviour, is equally incommunicable as to be God. How gloriously doth he triumph in this excellent peculiarity of the Godhead, in his expostulations with Job, (*ch.* xl. 9,) "Hast thou an arm like God?" *q.d.* "Come let us compare; stretch out that weak, withered, ulcerous arm of thine. Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency, array thyself with glory and beauty; try if thou canst make thyself shine in Godlike splendour; cast abroad the rage of thy wrath; behold every one that is proud, and abase him. Try thy power upon thy fellow mortals. See if thou canst crush all the haughty ones of this world, bring them down, and bind their faces in the dust of the grave. And (to recall thee to the greater things mentioned before) try if thou canst form me such another earth as this, establish its foundations, lay its corner-stone; if thou canst countermand the motions, bind up the influences of the stars in the heavens;—then will I confess unto thee, that thy own right hand can save thee." *v.* 14. It is, it seems, as much above created power to be a Saviour, as to be the Creator or Ruler of the world. And how should we dread to think of usurping the title and office of the great Immanuel, the Saviour, who is therefore "called Jesus, because he was to save his people from their sins." Matt. i. 21.

(2.) Yet there is a true sense wherein the saving act and power are otherwise and very variously ascribed: sometimes to faith, (Luke vii. 50,) "Thy faith hath saved thee:" sometimes to hope, "We are saved by hope," (Rom. viii. 24:) sometimes to baptism, (1 Pet. iii. 21,) "Baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh," &c.: sometimes to husbands and wives in reference to one other. 1 Cor. vii. 16. So is the gospel called the "gospel of our salvation." Eph. i. 13. "And to you is the word of this salvation sent." Acts xiii. 26. So are we "exhorted to save ourselves," (Acts ii. 40,) and others; (Jude 23,) "Others save with fear." Thus, in lower matters, is the act of writing, for instance, ascribed to the pen, to the hand

that uses it, and to the writer himself, that moves both; and we have no difficulty to understand those different forms of speech: nor is there a greater difficulty in the present case, so to ascribe to the creature the low subordinate agency, which in distinct capacities may belong to it, as in the mean time to reserve to God and Christ the supreme agency, which is most peculiar and appropriate to divine power and grace. 1 Pet. i. 5; Eph. ii. 8.

2. We now come next to show, that it was very manifestly agreeable to the most accurate wisdom of God, to employ such in the design and work of saving others, as were themselves concerned, and needed to be saved too; that were to be upon the same bottom themselves with the rest; and to venture their own souls, and their everlasting concernments the same way, and into the same hands. And this we shall labour to clear and make evident by degrees.

(1.) It was fit, since creatures were to be employed in this work, to make use of intelligent creatures, such as could understand their own errand, and act with design in pursuance of it.

(2.) Mankind was universally lost, so as all do need being saved themselves.

(3.) Therefore no intelligent creatures else could be employed herein, but the unfallen angels.

(4.) We may adventure to say, after God, and when he hath so determined the matter himself, though it was not fit for us to have said it before him, as if we would direct the Spirit of the Lord, or as his counsellors would instruct him, (Isa. xl.; Rom. xi.) that it was more suitable to make use to this purpose of sinful men, than of sinless angels. Let us sever and lay aside herein, what may at first sight seem specious, but is really not considerable in this matter; as that men in the same miserable circumstances with those whom they are to persuade, that they may save them, will be so much the more earnest and importunate, use so much the more pressing arguments, as having been upon the brink of hell and the borders of destruction; for we suppose such as are most likely to promote the salvation of others, to have been made sensible of their own undone, lost state, and to be in a way of recovery themselves. But hereupon it may also be supposed, they will therefore so much the more pathetically plead with sinners. Their knowledge of the terrors of the Lord will urge them to persuade men, (2 Cor. v. 11,) and make them eloquent at it. But what! more than angels? When the apostle (1 Cor. xiii.) supposes one speaking with the tongue of men and angels, doth he not intend a gradation, and signify the latter far to excel? And are we to suppose that the benignity of their own natures, their kindness to man,

and their perfect conformity, and obediential compliance and subjection to the will of their sovereign Lord, would not have obliged them to do their uttermost, if he had sent them upon such errands? We cannot doubt it. But,—

[1.] It is apparent that what the blessed God doth in pursuance of this saving design, he doth to the praise of the glory of his grace, and that it might appear the more conspicuous in the whole conduct of this affair.

[2.] That it is not within the compass of any created, no, not of angelical power, to change the hearts of men, and turn them to God. If angels were the constant preachers in all our assemblies, they could not with all their heavenly eloquence convert one sinner, if the immediate divine power did not exert itself. The people are "willing in the day of his power," who was God-man, as Ps. cx. 3. The Jews at Mount Sinai "received the law by dispensation of angels, yet kept it not." Acts vii. 53.

[3.] Yet if God should put forth his own power, by such a ministration; if angels should appear in glorious array among us, and speak to men with greater advantage, and more persuasive eloquence, than we can conceive; and marvellous effects by divine concurrence should ensue: those great effects among a sort of creatures led by sense, and who judge by the sight of the eye, would all be ascribed to the visibly glorious instrument, not to the supreme Agent, who is invisible and out of sight; even as in effects of another kind, the invisible power and Godhead that do all are little regarded by stupid man, whose dull eye stays and rests in the visible outside, and fixes his mind there too.

[4.] Therefore the rich treasures of the gospel are put into earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be, *i. e.* might appear to be, of God, and not of the inferior instrument. 2 Cor. iv. 7.

[5.] In this way of dispensation, wherein God speaks by men liable to the same passions with themselves, he accommodates himself to their frail state, who cannot bear glorious appearances; and to their own option and desires, who say to Moses, (Exod. xx. 19,) "Speak thou to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die." When they had heard the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words, accompanied with thunders and lightnings, they entreated that they might hear no more. Heb. xii. 19. The celestial glory, while our mould and frame is dust, doth more astonish than instruct. Those soft and pleasant words, "This is my beloved Son,—hear him;" spoken by a voice from the excellent glory in the transfiguration, made the disciples that heard them sore afraid, and fall on their faces. Matt. xvii. 5, 6. How would it unhinge the world, and discom-

pose the whole state of civil affairs, if all conversions were to be as Saul's was, when he became Paul, with such concomitant effects, not only on himself but all others present; especially being wrought, (as most conversions may be) in numerous assemblies, the convert struck blind for some days, and all that were in the place speechless! Perhaps we have one such instance to let us see how inconvenient it were such instances should be common; or that this should be God's ordinary way of converting and saving sinners.

[6.] The holding of men in this world under the ministry of men, not of angels, in reference to the affairs of their salvation, is certainly more suitable to the condition of probationers for eternity, and another world; and more aptly subservient to the business of the judgment day, when all the talents men were entrusted with, their natural endowments and faculties, as well as additional advantages, are to be accounted for. We shall hereafter understand better, but may, in good measure, conjecture now, why there is so fixed a gulf by the wisdom and counsel of God, between the two worlds, the visible and invisible, and so little commerce between them.

And whereas in the Old Testament the apparition of angels was more frequent, that passage, the world to come being said not to be put in subjection to angels, seems to signify, the time after the Messiah's appearing should be more entirely left to the conduct of a gospel ministry, as the connexion, (Heb. ii. 4, 5,) intimates.

[7.] And though the compassions of men who have been in danger to perish themselves, cannot be supposed more powerfully to influence them unto an earnest endeavour of saving them that are in the like danger, than the kindness and benignity of angels would do, if they were so employed; yet their concern to save others, who are also to be saved themselves the same way, is likely, more easily, more generally, more sensibly, to be apprehended by those others, to whom they are to apply themselves upon this account. They have kinder thoughts of one another, than they are like to have of a superior order of creatures. Their own flesh and blood is nearer akin to them; yea, they are more apt to love one another, (and consequently to apprehend one another's love) than the blessed God himself: which is more than intimated in that of that holy apostle, (1 John iv. 20,) "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?" Things affect us not merely as they are, but as they are understood. Ministers cannot be kinder to men's souls than the blessed angels, among whom there is a joy for the conversion of a sinner, much more pure, exalted, and sublime, than a human breast is capable of; and, in proportion, more fervent desire of such conversions:

but their propensions towards us, though they should be expressed by counsels and precepts that tend to our good, would be less apprehended by most men; they carrying a severity with them, which makes them need such insinuative recommendations as slide more easily into their minds from creatures of their own order.

[8.] Our Lord himself was so concerned for the saving of souls, as who could be besides? But though before the flood he is said to have preached to the old world, it was by his Spirit in the ministry of Noah, a man like themselves to whom he preached. But when he thought fit to preach immediately himself, he put on flesh, and dwelt, or did tabernacle among men as one of them. John i. 14. So Moses foretold: "a prophet like to me shall God raise up, him shall you hear."* So his terror was not to make us afraid. And though his compassionateness towards us is argued from his being tempted, and compassed with infirmities,† as we are, that cannot be understood as if hereby he became more gracious and merciful towards us in himself; but his being so was the more apprehensible to us.

[9.] The steadiness of the course God hath taken in this matter, shows what his judgment was of the fitness of it, "who doth all things according to the counsel of his own will." Eph. i. 11. It is observable, that when our Lord was now about to ascend, he fixes a ministry that he promises his presence unto, always, or every day, unto the end of the world. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Ascending on high he gave (among other) these gifts to men, even to the rebellious, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers. Ps. lxviii.; Eph. iv. 8—11. And that he might put an honour upon this ministry, when he designed the gospel to be preached to Cornelius and his relatives, though he prepares Peter by a vision, and sends an angel to Cornelius, it was not to preach to him, but direct him to send for Peter to preach to him and his; who tells him, when he fell at his feet, "I also am a man." Acts x. We are human preachers, though from a divine Master and Lord, and of a divine word.

II. But now the mind and counsel of God being sufficiently evident in this matter, both in the fact and in the fitness of it, to make use of such for promoting the common salvation, as do need themselves to partake therein: we come now to show, that the ministers of the gospel of Christ ought to be very intent upon the business of their own salvation, conjunctly with that of them that hear them; and of theirs, with their own. There is a double obligation meeting upon a minister of the gospel; that of the law of nature, and of the law of his office; he is to comply with both. Nature obliges him to intend his own

* Acts iii. 22; from Deut. xviii. † Heb. iv. 15.

salvation; his office, theirs that hear him. The same authority lays him under the one obligation and the other. For he that is the author of nature, is the author of his office too.

1. He ought so to mind the concern of his people's salvation, as not to neglect his own. This is so evident in itself, that it would be superfluous to speak to it were it not that we, as well as they to whom we preach, do need to be put in remembrance of very important things, though we know them. 2 Pet. i. 12. To know and to consider, we not only may distinguish, but do too often separate. And there are divers things to be considered to this purpose.

(1.) That the royal law, as it is called, (James ii. 8,) which requires us to love our neighbour as one's self, makes love to ourselves, *i. e.* not merely which we bear, but which we owe to ourselves, the measure of that which we ought to have for our neighbour. And that which ought to be the measure in any kind, should be the most perfect in that kind; and must oblige us to love first our most noble self, our own souls.

(2.) It is gross hypocrisy to seem earnestly intent upon saving other men, and to be neglectful of one's own salvation. It is sin only which endangers both; meant by the mote and the beam. Matt. vii. 3—5. And our Saviour, we see there, stigmatizes such a one with the brand of a hypocrite, that is officious to take out the mote from his brother's eye, but never concerns himself to cast out the beam from his own eye.

(3.) It is a scandalous and an ignominious absurdity, as the apostle's sharp expostulations imply, (Rom. ii. 19—22,) to take upon one's self to be a guide to the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, to take up with having a form of knowledge and of the truth in the law, and to teach others, and not to teach one's self! "Preachest thou, (as he adds) a man should not steal, and dost thou steal? thou that sayest, a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast of the law, by breaking the law dishonourest thou God?" This is that which makes the name of God be blasphemed among the Gentiles; as he tells us it is written, referring to some texts in the Old Testament. Ezek. xvi. 47—52; *ch.* xxxvi. 22. It is a blackening thing when it can be said, "I was keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." Cant. i. 6. Our Lord speaks of it as a reproachful proverb, which he, knowing the hearts of men, observed some were apt to misapply to him, Luke iv. (noted to have been in use among the Greeks, and which with that empire had reached Judea) "Physician, heal thyself." It would be very opprobrious to us who are in the ministry, if it could be truly said to us, we seem concerned at the diseasedness that appears in our flocks, but overlook the

diseases and distempers of our own souls. That was meant for a bitter reproach to our Lord dying upon the cross, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." To us, if it might be truly said, it must be a just reproach as well as bitter; our saving ourselves being our duty enjoined us, and tending to the saving of others; whereas our Lord's saving himself, in the sense intended by those scoffers, was against the law he was then under, and against his own design; tending to overthrow it, and leave them to perish whom he was dying to save.

(4.) The observable neglect of the design to save our own souls, would defeat and destroy the other design of saving theirs that hear us. For who can think us serious in our preaching, or that we believe ourselves in what we say, if we manifestly decline ourselves that way of salvation, which we propose to others? We tempt men to infidelity, if we live like infidels.

It was a cutting repartee made by an atheistical person to one, that leading an ill life yet professed to wonder that the other, the arguments for a Deity being so plain and cogent, did not own there was a God; the other replied, he much more wondered, that he who did own him should yet live as he did! This tends to overthrow all our preaching. Though our Saviour directs to do as they said, who sat in Moses' chair, not as they did; because they said and did not: yet he did not thereby justify those self-repugnant teachers: for his reflection upon them is sufficiently severe. And we are to consider in the case, not merely what man's duty is, but what their dispositions are: not what they ought, but what they are apt to do. If they think we do but act a part, when we speak never so movingly to them, they will be little moved by all that we can say. They will be more apt to conclude, that we, who have studied and searched into the matters of religion more than they have done, have found some flaw at the bottom, and perceive the very foundations of it to be infirm, and therefore practise not according to the doctrines and rules of it; but that for our gain, because it was the calling we were bred to, and we know not how else to live, we are content, and some way constrained, to keep up the forms we found in use; and maintain them that they may maintain us.

(5.) Yet when it shall be found, as upon strict inquiry it cannot but be, that the foundations of religion are more firm than those of heaven and earth, how dismal will it be to have preached to others, and ourselves to be castaways? 1 Cor. ix. 27. For as by loose, licentious walking, we hazard other men's souls, which we should endeavour to save; so we, more certainly, lose our own. God may save them some other way, and by other, more apt instruments; but we have little reason to expect that

we shall save our own, either while we design it not; (as if we were to be saved by chance) or, much less, if we counteract any such design. Which we may, most destructively, by that single instance which the apostle, in that last-mentioned place, refers to; an indulged intemperance, or not keeping our bodies in subjection; in servitude, or in a serviceable temper, as the word δουλαγωγεῖν imports, to subdue them into the state of servants; wherein rather than fail, one would use the severity which this other word ὑπωπιάζειν there signifies. It is plain, that "if we live after the flesh we must die." Rom. viii. 13. There is one law for ministers and people. And it is only by the Spirit we are so to mortify the deeds of the flesh that we may live. How dismal when a minister's own breath poisons him! When the very gospel which he preaches is a deadly odour* to himself! How horrid, when a shepherd is the leader of the epicurean herd!

(6.) But if, by neglecting visibly the gospel-way of saving himself, he not only hazard, but actually destroy other men's souls, together with his own, he then perishes under a much heavier load of guilt than another man can, that was not under his obligations. As his obligation was double, so is his guilt. When sinful, vicious inclination, hath depraved his mind, put out the eye of his practical understanding, so that the blind leads the blind, "both fall into the ditch;" but he falls much the deeper, having the other's destruction charged upon him, together with his own. Such teachers as bind heavy burdens for others, which they will not touch, fall under an aggravated woe. And the case is the same with them that prepare, and set before their hearers, the most nutritive and delectable fare, which they will not taste. And for that reason, perhaps, the people will not feed on them, because the preachers themselves too evidently appear to have no taste or relish of them.

2. The ministers of Christ ought to conjoin, the serious design and earnest endeavour of saving them that hear them, with the design and endeavour of saving themselves. They are not to be so bound up within themselves, as only to mind their own things, though of this most noble kind.

(1.) The law of nature obliges them to it, which extends its obligation as far as human nature extends: and must therefore include them with the rest of mankind under the same common notion, *viz.* them who are ministers, not as they are such; for nature hath not made them ministers, but as they are men; whom the royal law, mentioned before, requires to love their neighbour as themselves: and therefore to seek another's felicity, not before, but as their own. We are taught to count it an unnatural barbarity, when we see any pressed and pinched by

* 2 Cor. ii. 16, ὀσμὴ.

bodily wants and miseries, to hide ourselves from our own flesh. Isa. lviii. 7. How much more if we see immortal souls in danger to be lost and perish, that are of the same make and capacity with our own!

(2.) The law of Christ, as such, obliges Christians to the same thing: which is not in this instance, therefore, a diverse law, but hath a different stamp and impress, as being the law of the kingdom of God in Christ. We are to "bear one another's burdens, so fulfilling the law of Christ." Gal. vi. 2. What so weighty a burden can there be upon any man as this, the importance of his eternal salvation? And, which is plainly here referred to, when we are required to endeavour the restoring of such as have been overtaken, and lapsed into sin; by which the precious soul is hurt and endangered, should they be left to sink under such a burden. Christians are elsewhere required to have compassion on such as they see in such danger, to "save them with fear, and pull them as firebrands out of the fire." Jude 23. These are obligations common to ministers with others. But,—

(3.) The law of their own office lays upon them an obligation peculiar, as such, to themselves. What serves their office for, but this, as the principal end and design of it? What is it meant for, but to gather in souls to Christ, and confirm them in him; because "there is salvation in no other; nor is there any other name given among men, by which any can be saved?" Acts iv. 12. They are the messengers of the glad tidings of peace. Their business is so well known, even in hell itself, that a spirit from thence speaks it out, "These are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation," *i. e.* to human creatures, of whom the possessed person was one. Acts xvi. 17.

(4.) They are obliged by the example of their blessed Master, our Lord Jesus himself, the primary Saviour by office; whom they are both to imitate, and to serve in this merciful design. Christians are so far to imitate them, as they do Christ, (1 Cor. i. 11;) which implies their obligation to imitate him, as the word μιμηταὶ, there used, signifies. The great salvation, which none that neglect can escape vengeance, began to be spoken by the Lord himself, then by them that heard him, and so on, by others that succeed in the same office. This is following Christ in the way of imitation, as in the mentioned place. And we are required to have "the same mind in us, which was in Christ," (Phil. ii. 5;) and are told wherein, (*v.* 6—8;) which read over at leisure, and consider what was that deep humiliation and suffering for, but the salvation of souls. And consider that this is said, as to the saints at Philippi, so particularly to the bishops and deacons there: which shows their common and

their special obligation both together. And now, can we behold with what compassions and in what agonies, even unto blood, our blessed Lord pursued this design, and not feel a constraint in our spirits, in our lower sphere and capacity, to serve it also to our uttermost?

(5.) They are obliged by the peculiar advantages they have for this work, and those they expect by it.

[1.] They have special advantages for it from their very calling, being separated to the gospel; taken off from other business, to give themselves (as in this context) wholly to this. They are supposed, therefore, to know more of the concernments of souls; of "the terrors of the Lord," (2 Cor. v. 11;) whence, therefore, they are to "persuade men;" of the nature of sin, and how it entangles men's spirits; of the wiles of Satan, and how he waits for advantages to destroy them; of the foundations of religion, and by what arts they are endeavoured to be subverted and shaken, and by what means and methods they are to be demonstrated or established; of the mysteries of the gospel of Christ, and how they are to be unfolded: to have more special assistances from heaven in their work, according as they faithfully mind it,—Christ's promised presence therein, even to the end. These are talents, with others tending to the obtaining of these, which they are to be accountable for. And hereby they are strongly obliged, with their own, to intend earnestly the salvation of other men's souls.

[2.] They expect great advantages by it: that since nothing is more grateful to our Lord Christ, than the progress of this saving work, he will bountifully reward them that faithfully serve him in it; that if they be "stedfast and immoveable, abounding in this work of the Lord, (as he hath not a greater, now in doing, in this world) their labour in him shall not be in vain." They shall hear from him, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord." If they turn many to righteousness, (or endeavour it with sincere minds) they shall shine as stars in the firmament. And in the mean time, the honour and the pleasure of serving that mighty Redeemer and lover of souls, in so glorious a design, have in them a very excellent reward; and which cannot but be esteemed such by a right mind.

(6.) They are obliged by the exigency of their own case. They cannot, as that is stated, neglect the design of saving other men's souls without forfeiting their own. If they warn them not, over whom as watchmen they are set, they perish, but their blood will be required at their hands. It is a mighty trust they stand charged with, which if they discharge not, they are liable to accusation and condemnation, as false and faithless servants; perfidious to the souls of men; traitorous to the King of kings;

whose interest they will have betrayed, being his agents and ministers in his kingdom of grace; about the prosperous state of which kingdom, with the successful progress of the affairs of it, he is most deeply concerned.

And now, from this conjunct consideration of these two great ends which a minister of Christ is to propound to himself, I might proceed to consider them severally, and apart; but this the case doth not require, it being easy to sever what hath been said to the one and the other; nor do our limits allow it.

We therefore go on to the more necessary use of the whole. To this purpose we collect,—

1. That this world is universally in a very miserable state: for it is the business of Christ's ministers to endeavour both the salvation of them that hear them, and their own.

(1.) The salvation of them that hear them. This is very indefinite: let who will be the hearers, they are supposed to be such as need to be saved. The object of their ministry is all nations, and every creature, *viz.* that is or shall be capable of being taught the way of salvation. Therefore all nations are deluged by the destructive evils from which they are to be saved; and the world is every where inhabited by miserable creatures. We are told, "that sin and death have passed upon all men," (Rom. v. 12,) and all the ends of the earth are invited to look unto God in Christ, (as the application of this context, Phil. ii. shows) that they may be saved. Isa. xlv. 22. Whereas, therefore, the ministers of the gospel of salvation, wheresoever they can obtain to be heard, are to endeavour the salvation of their hearers; it shows they can speak to none who stand not in need of saving mercy.

(2.) And that they are also to save themselves as well as them that hear them, more fully shows the absolute universality of the ruin that hath befallen this world; that there are among men none to be found that may be employed in saving others, but who are of the lost themselves, and so far drowned in the common deluge of perdition and destruction, as to need his help as well as the rest, who came to seek and save them who are lost; and to stretch out to him craving hands, with that crying voice, "Lord, save us, we perish!"

2. The common stupidity of this wretched world is hereupon most observable and amazing, that so few such cries are sent up to heaven! Men are involved in a common ruin, overtures are made to them of common salvation, but they are in reference hereto destitute of common sense, *i. e.* of such sense as is common in less important cases. Their misery lies in their having lost God; but little do they apprehend this loss. Amidst their other miseries, they cry out when some that are mightier oppress others, but none says, "Where is God my maker?" Job xxxv.

9, 10. "The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if any will understand, and seek after God; but they are every one gone back; (or are in an averse posture,) none doth this good, no, not one;" (Ps. xiv. and liii.;) none, till He give an effectual touch to their drowsy spirits, and say, inwardly and vitally, to their hearts, "Seek ye my face," so as to make their hearts answer, "Thy face, Lord, will we seek." Ps. xxvii. 8. Preventing grace doth this, otherwise they feel no need of God, they miss him not, are content to be without him in the world; yea, say to him, "Depart from us." Distance from him is chosen and desired; from him whose offspring we are, who is the Father of spirits, their parent, their life, their blessedness; of whom they are, and to whom if they tend not, they cannot but be miserable. It is the salvation of the soul that is the end of faith, (1 Pet. i. 9,) that faith by which we are to come to God, "believing that he is, and will be, the rewarder of them that diligently seek him—being redeemed to God by the blood of his Son," (Rev. v. 9,) and who "suffered once, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God," (1 Pet. iii. 18,) and who upon his suffering intercedes for the same purpose, and is "able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him, because he ever lives to make intercession for them." But this salvation of the soul, this coming to God, or redemption by Christ, and his intercession thereupon, who looks after? Neither the end, the salvation of their souls, coming back to God; nor his method for attaining this end; are regarded, or so much as thought on. To have this flesh saved from any thing that is grievous to it, every one covets, and endeavours in vain: it must, however, rot in the dust, and be, in the mean time, a prey to worms. Its own father, mother, and sister, will devour it. Job xvii. 14. The Father of their spirits would save and satisfy them, but him they shun, and will not know.

Who that observes how men spend their days, even under the gospel, which makes their time a day of grace, wherein they should be working out their salvation, can think they have any concern to be saved? Their life is continual trifling; some pass their days in mirth and jollity; doth this signify any sense of misery, or fear of perishing, and that destruction from the Almighty is a terror to them? These are not more idle, than others are idly busy to get estates and a name on earth; but what is this to their being saved? They are liable to the common more sensible miseries of life, and they are without God; but this is no misery with them. This misery is their element, and burdens them not. Were their present case, and future danger in this respect apprehended and felt, how full of outcries would this world be; "O we are lost and perishing!" Such cries would ring through the earth, and pierce heaven!

But the same carnality that is death, (Rom. viii. 6,) and makes them miserable, makes them stupid too, and insensible of their misery. And are these reasonable souls, intelligent, immortal minds and spirits, that are thus stupified, turned into such clods and stones? O deplorable case! Methinks such an office set up in the world, of men that are to save their own and other men's souls, should make them consider, and bethink themselves, What is it for? It must have had an original, and so it hath a divine aspect, a taste of heaven upon it; and must have an end suitable to the wisdom and grace of heaven, which claims to be entertained otherwise than with neglect and contempt! And indeed this leads to take more notice expressly, in a further inference.

3. That there is a saving design on foot in the world: set on foot by the blessed God himself. Otherwise in so great a ruin as is come upon this wretched world, what could it signify for any man to offer at saving either himself or others? How vain an attempt were it for any man, out of so deep and horrid a gulf of impurity, misery, darkness, and death, to think of lifting up himself, and of plucking up others as high as heaven! This intimation carries hope with it. It is a voice from heaven to such as are so employed, as Timothy was, O save thyself, and as many as thou canst besides. It takes away all pretence for despair: God puts not men upon vain attempts. A lively hope ought to spring from hence; "and we are saved by hope," (Rom. viii. 24,) as without hope no man would ever design for salvation, or any thing else. Hope is the engine that moves the world, keeps the intelligent part of it in action every where. No man could rationally stir in pursuit of any design, whereof he despaired. But as to other designs, men's hopes are commonly self-sprung, and end in shame. But when one can say, "Lord, thy word hath caused me to hope; thou hast put me upon aiming to be saved, and to save others;" it speaks this to be a just and hopeful undertaking. I will therefore set about working out my own salvation, (and with my own, other men's, as far as is within my compass) expecting he will graciously set in with me, and work in order hereto "to will and to do of his own good pleasure," without which all mine will be lost labour.

4. We further collect, That the blessed God is most intent upon this design. That which this supposes, and that which it imports, speaks him intent. It supposes he hath appointed a sovereign Saviour set over this work; otherwise there could be none subordinate. It imports he hath settled an office on purpose; made it some men's special business, to intend (as every one ought) his own salvation, and withal to give himself up to this great work, the saving all he can. An office set up for the saving of souls ought to be a great thing in our eyes; and is a

standing testimony for God, how willing he is men should come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved.

5. They that bear this office should be highly honoured for their work's sake. For how glorious an employment is it to be instrumental to salvation, to be in any kind saviours! I could tell you of some great princes in the pagan world, that to their other splendid titles have had the addition of *soter*, "a saviour;" as to some others, the "destroyer of cities" hath been given as a name of reproach. And you do know who hath the name of Apollyon, or Abaddon. Rev. ix. 11.

6. It highly magnifies the wisdom, power, and sovereignty of God, that he can, and will make use of so mean instruments, for so high and glorious a purpose. For what end and purpose can be greater than the recovery and salvation of souls, so deformed, miserable, and lost, as the souls of men universally were? And what instruments could be meaner, or more vile, than such as needed to be saved themselves with the same salvation? That God should make use of them who were darkness, (Eph. v. 8,) to enlighten the world, (Matt. v. 14;) of such as were but sinful flesh, (John iii. 6,) to be able ministers of the Spirit, (2 Cor. iii. 6;) of such as had minds that were enmity against God, (Rom. viii. 7,) to reconcile men to himself, (2 Cor. v. 20;) these are some of the wonders he works among the children of men: when he hath converted some, to use them (first for the converting of others, and then) for the strengthening of their converted brethren.

7. The ministers of Christ are to be examples to them over whom they are set. They are to be so in the beginning of their course, in their first turn to God, though then in a more passive sense; "That I might be a pattern," &c. saith the apostle, (1 Tim. i. 16,) and in their after-course, as in this context, (*v.* 12,) "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation," &c. They must be leaders in the whole way of salvation, from first to last.

8. Pride in the ministers of the gospel, and in them that live under a gospel-ministry, is a most monstrous absurdity: for what are we, all of us, but a company of wretched creatures, just perishing, and only (at the best) but in the way of being saved? What have such to be proud of?

9. Both Christ's ministers, and their flocks, are under the greatest obligation imaginable unto union. For their case is one and the same, their miseries were the same, their dangers the same. They must all have the same Saviour, the same way of salvation, and the same end; the same state of salvation, which all the nations of the saved are to be brought to at last. Rev. xxi. 24.

10. It is an unquestionable thing, that salvation is to be

designed for by all sorts. Ministers must aim to save themselves and their hearers: and is the minister to design his people's salvation, and not they their own? They have mean thoughts of salvation that stumble here, as if they were only to be saved from hell-flames! But to be saved from sin which makes us unlike God, to have his image and his love perfected in us, to be with the rest of the elect, partakers of salvation with eternal glory, is that mean? 2 Tim. ii. 10.

11. The ministers of the gospel must, some time or other, be taken away from their work. It is time, a limited duration, within which their work and business lie, for the saving themselves and those that hear them. They are to save themselves. This end they are to pursue; and it must sometime be attained. They are not always to labour, and never rest: sometime they are to receive the fruit of this their labour, and the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. As more time passes, their salvation draws nearer than when they believed; they are not always to be in saving, and never saved. In mercy to them, God will translate them; and may it not be in judgment to many, whom they earnestly laboured to save, but who rejected their counsels, and strove against their own salvation? That they may not always labour in vain for themselves, and because they have laboured in vain for many others, they must be withdrawn from their hard and toilsome labour, and enter into rest.

12. The loss is great, and grievous beyond all expression, above all our lamentation, when such are taken away as have made it their business to save themselves and those that heard them. In their endeavour to save themselves, they have been great examples. In their endeavour to save others, they may have been great instruments of much saving good to many a soul. How few are they that drive such designs! How fast doth their number decrease! How fitly may we take up that of the Psalmist, "when the godly man ceases, and the faithful fail from among the children of men;" and what could be said with greater pathos, (Ps. xii. 1,) "Help, Lord," as in a common ruin: help, help, for God's sake, help, Lord, help? My friends, are you not sensible you have lost such a one, even while you are not yet saved, while you yet need to be working out your salvation? The effectually called, it is true, are saved, (2 Tim. i. 9,) "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling:" and (which is in substance the same thing) the regenerate are saved; "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his mercy. he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Tit. iii. 5. But if this were the case of you all, how much yet remains to be done, in order to your full and consummate salvation! You have yet mighty

difficulties to overcome; a body of death, which you are not yet delivered from; for are not these some of your groans in reference to it, "O who shall deliver us?" a world full of troubles and snares; your adversary the devil, that goes about seeking whom he may devour; all the principalities and powers of the kingdom of darkness, that you are to contend with, and with whom you are to dispute every step of your way to heaven: and do you not need such a leader in that way? And if any are fallen into drowsy slumbers, do you not need his awakening ministry? If dead, how often hath the blessed Spirit breathed life into you by his quickening ministry? How often hath God used him to enlighten you, when you have been in the dark; to clear up the great doctrines of the gospel, when you have not distinctly understood them; to establish you in the faith, when you have wavered; to resolve you in matters of practice, when you have been in doubt; to encourage you in your fears and faintings; to comfort you in your sadness and sorrows? I wonder not that there are many weeping eyes, and should much wonder if there be not many aching, trembling hearts among you, for what you have lost; and from an apprehension how hard, and almost hopeless it is, your loss should be soon or equally supplied.

He was long in preparing and forming to be what he was, when you lost him. His station among you in this neighbourhood, when first he undertook the pastoral charge of this church, over which the Holy Ghost made him overseer, required a man of as much wisdom and grace as any such station could well be supposed to do: considering how numerous, how intelligent, and well instructed a people, he was to take the care of. I well remember, that about three or four and forty years ago, being desired to give some help, on a Lord's day, to that eminent servant of Christ, Mr. Greenhill, whose praise is still in all the churches, I then first heard him preach: and (if my memory fail not) he had about that time in hand some part of that excellent discourse of the Almost Christian: I had then the opportunity of beginning an acquaintance with him. His excellent good natural parts, his ingenuous education, his industry, his early labours in preaching the gospel of Christ in his native country, in the city, and in this place; his conjunction and society, for some years, with that excellent servant of God before named; above all, the gracious assistances he had from Heaven; gave him great advantages to be "a minister of Christ, approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." And his multiplied years, unto the seventieth, with the continual addition thereby to the rich treasury of his experiences, still improved him more and more: so that, there being no decay of his natural endowments, and a continual

increase of his supernatural, you had the best of him at last: whereby, indeed, your loss was the greater, but your obligation was also the greater, that God continued to you the enjoyment of him so long; and that in a serviceable state. But when he could be no longer serviceable in his stated, delightful work, it was by the decay not of the inward, but the outward man; so that when he could preach to you, and converse with you no longer, he could earnestly and fervently pray for you to the end. And God did not afflict you, by leaving long among you only the shadow, the outside of the man, and of such a man!

He took little pleasure in embroiling himself or his hearers, in needless and fruitless controversies. The great, substantial doctrines of the gospel were his principal study and delight; such as lay nearest the vitals, and the very heart of religion and godliness; and most directly tending to the saving them that heard him. The subjects which he chose to insist upon, from time to time, in the course of his ministry, showed as to this his spirit and design. Having formed from the holy Scriptures that scheme of thoughts which satisfied him, and gave him a clear ground whereupon to preach the gospel with an unrecoiling heart, he loved not to discompose it. His judgment in things which had that reference, being constantly moderate, and unexceptionably sound; remote from rigorous and indefensible extremities, on the one hand and the other. Hereupon he drove at his mark without diversion; not so much aiming to proselyte souls to a party, as to Christ; and to engage men, as much as in him lay, to be sound and thorough Christians. Hitherto tended his sermons from year to year. The great subject he had in hand, and which he left unfinished, when God took him off from his public work, was manifestly pointed this way; *viz.* of the covenant of God in Christ. And his annual course of preaching a sermon on May day, to young men, had the same manifest scope and aim, with which his public labours were concluded; God so ordering it, that his last sermon was this year on that day.

His judgment in reference to matters of church order, was for union and communion of all visible Christians, *viz.* of such as did visibly hold the Head, as to the principal *credenda* and *agenda* of Christianity, the great things belonging to the faith and practice of a Christian; so as nothing be made necessary to Christian communion but what Christ hath made necessary; or what is indeed necessary to one's being a Christian. What he publicly assayed to this purpose the world knows: and many more private endeavours and strugglings of his for such a union, I have not been unacquainted with: the unsuccessfulness of which endeavours, he said, not long before his last confinement, he thought would break his heart. He having openly, among

divers persons, and with great earnestness, sometime before expressed his consent to some proposals, which if the parties concerned had agreed in the desire of the thing itself, must unavoidably have inferred such a union, without prejudice to their principles; and on such terms, as must have extended it much further; else it had signified little. But this must be effected, as is too apparent, not by mere human endeavour, but by an Almighty Spirit poured forth, which (after we have suffered awhile) shall καταρτίσαι, put us into joint, and make every joint know its place in the body; (1 Pet. v. 10,) shall conquer private interests and inclinations, and overawe men's hearts by the authority of the divine law; which now, how express soever it is, little availeth against such prepossessions. Till then Christianity will be (among us) a languishing, withering thing. When the season comes of such an effusion of the Spirit from on high, there will be no parties. And amidst the wilderness-desolation that cannot but be till that season comes, it matters little, and signifies to me scarce one straw, what party of us is uppermost: the most righteous, (as they may be vogued) will be but as briars and scratching thorns; and it is better to suffer by such, than be of them. In the mean time, it is a mark of God's heavy displeasure, when persons of so healing spirits are taken away. And if it awaken any of us, that will tend to prepare us for the effects of it; which preparation seems a thing more to be hoped than prevention.

But this worthy servant of Christ sees not the woful day, whatever of it he might foresee. His removal makes to many, indeed, a woful day, and that all about him did long foresee. He was long languishing, and even dying daily: but amidst surrounding death, as a relation told me, there was no appearance of any the least cloud upon his spirit, that obscured the evidences of his title to a blessed eternity. Being asked how he did, he said, "Going home, as every honest man ought when his work is done." He was much in admiring God's mercies under his afflicting hand; saying, "Every thing on this side hell is mercy;" that the mercies he received were greater than his burdens, though in themselves grievous; that he rested upon that promise, that his Father would lay no more upon him than he would enable him to bear; that he expected to be saved only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him. Though he well understood, as I had sufficient reason to know, that Christ's righteousness is never imputed to any, but where, if the subject be capable, there is an inherent righteousness also, that is no cause of our salvation, but the character of the saved. And having before precautioned some that were about him, not to be surprised if he went away suddenly, he repeated the ejaculation, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;" and renewing the former

caution, by saying, "Remember what I said before," as he sat in his chair, with all possible composure he bowed his head, and, without sigh or motion, expired in a moment. The sighing part he left to others that stay behind: and I do even feel the sorrows of his most afflicted family, his mournful widow, his sorrowing sons and daughters, his destitute church, with all others that got good, or might have done, by his quickening, spiritful, piercing ministry; or had the advantage and satisfaction of his acquaintance and converse.

Your grief cannot but be measured by your love; and your love by his in the several kinds and objects of it: his conjugal, paternal, pastoral, friendly love, as he was an affectionate husband, a tender father, a vigilant pastor, and a pleasant friend. But withal, let your consolations be measured by the proper grounds thereof. It is a most improper, irrational, unchristian way of being comforted in such a case, only to let time wear away our sorrows. It is but a negative, a heathenish, yea, a worse than heathenish method of receiving comfort. For I have observed it to be animadverted on, as an intolerable absurdity, by some among the heathens, that time should work that cure of grief and sorrow, which reason and prudence work not. And thus it is plain we shall be relieved, not by holy thoughts, but by not thinking. So it may in time be forgotten, that ever such a man as Mr. Mead was minister in Stepney! And what is this to Christian consolation?

But we need not wander from the text, for a positive and a solid ground of comfort. Remember, it was his business to save himself and those that heard him. As you have no doubt of his salvation, which I believe none of you have, make sure of your own. Put on, with the breastplate of faith and love, that helmet, the hope of salvation. "You are of the day; watch and be sober, as those that are not appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. v. 8, 9. And then consider, (as I doubt not many a soul will bless God for him, for ever) how glorious a sight it will be to see him, one day, appear in the head of a numerous company of saved ones; and say as a subordinate parent in the apostle's sense, (1 Cor. iv. 15,) "Lord! here am I, and the children thou hast given me."

In conclusion. For you of his dear and beloved flock, this may be directive to you as well as consolatory. Would you have a pastor after God's heart? Put yourselves under the conduct, as much as in you is, of such a pastor as you apprehend will be intent, in all his ministrations, upon this double end, to save himself and them that hear him. And labour to "be perfect, be of one mind, and live in peace, so the God of love and peace shall be with you." 2 Cor. xiii. 11. And "remember him as one that hath had the rule over you, and hath spoken to you

the word of the Lord, and follow the faith of such, considering the end of their conversation; and that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." As you change pastors, you will not need to change Christs, so as to have one yesterday, another to-day, and a third to-morrow. Pastors under the gospel, as well as priests under the law, were many, because of death: but our blessed Lord, "because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." Heb. vii. 24. Therefore, do you never think of another Christ, as their doubt was, (Matt. xi. 3,) but cleave to this your great Lord with purpose of heart, till he give you at last an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom.

Let his mournful relatives, and all of you to whom he was dear, consider what our Lord offered as matter of consolation in the most trying case of this kind that ever could occur to poor mortals; *i. e.* when he himself was to be taken away from his sorrowing family and followers. It is but a little while; *q. d.* my words have a plain meaning; "a little while, and you shall not see me, and again a little while, and you shall see me; and because I go to my Father. Ye now have sorrow, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and your joy no man taketh from you." John xvi. 20.

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will: working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

A FUNERAL SERMON,

FOR THAT FAITHFUL, LEARNED, AND MOST WORTHY MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL,

THE REV. PETER VINK, B.D.

WHO DECEASED SEPT. 6, 1702.

TO THE TRULY PIOUS

MRS. MARY VINK,

RELICT OF THE DECEASED.

My dear and honoured Sister,

The relation I stand in to you, by that union which some years since the good providence of God hath brought about between our families, obliges me, besides what I owe you upon the common Christian account to partake with you in your sorrows for this late afflicting loss ; as I have, according to my measure, in the satisfaction of enjoying so pleasant and delectable a relative and friend. And I would not only bear my own much lighter part of this burden, but (if I knew how) ease and lighten your part. It ought to do much towards it, (by helping you to poise and balance your burden) to put you in mind, that you have a greater and nearer relation left. " Your Maker is your husband ;" God all-sufficient, in whom is immense fulness ; who can be always present, and most intimately converse with your spirit ; who never dies, and to whom your relation is eternal : which are all things not agreeable, or possible, to any earthly relative. " This God is to be your God for ever and ever, and your guide unto the death :" even in this wilderness, on this side death, where we most need a guide. Nor hath your most tender deceased consort, otherwise left you alone. He hath left you with an observant son and his yoke-fellow, with a dear and only brother, that, it is to be hoped, will severally be found full of dutiful and brotherly affection towards you.

And you have genuine relatives and branches remaining to you, daughter and daughter's children, that through God's goodness may be continuing and growing comforts to you.

And this season of your separation from so pleasant a companion and guide of your life, will be of no long continuance. It should occasion you to intermingle thanksgivings with lamentation, that your union and enjoyment continued so long. And for what remains, the time is short ; therefore they that lose such relations are to "weep as if they wept not—remembering that the fashion of this world passes away." Especially it ought to be considered, that such a sad parting will be recompensed by the most joyful meeting ; when they that have slept in Jesus, God will bring with him ; and the survivors, at that day, be caught up into the clouds, to meet their Redeemer (and, no doubt, the redeemed) in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. Wherefore, let us comfort ourselves and each other with these words ; which have a fulness in them richly sufficient for you, and for,

My dear sister,

Your sincerely affectionate

And very respectful brother,

JOHN HOWE.

A FUNERAL SERMON.

Acts v. 20.

Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

The present speaker in this text is an angel of God; one of those blessed spirits from among the principalities and powers in heavenly places, who greatly delight, as you have lately heard,* and I hope are, God willing, further to hear, to be concerned about the affairs of God's church upon earth. So that we depart not much from our former subject in diverting to this. But, whereas the speaker was an immortal angel, and the subject spoken of words of life; these, you may think, are things very remote from the design of a funeral discourse: yet you are withal to consider, that the persons spoken unto were mortal men, Peter, with the rest of the apostles, whose lives were in jeopardy every hour. That they are so mentioned in this history, "Peter, and the rest of the apostles;" and what we find expressly recorded of him besides, that it was endeavoured the diseased might be put under his shadow passing by; and that he afterwards in this chapter is only named, with the addition, the other apostles, making their defence, being convened before the council, (*v.* 29,) shows that Peter was more eminently active, vigorous, forward, and zealous in the work of Christ; but far from the affectation of principality over the rest. Quite another consideration may well be understood to have urged him; and which our Lord seems to refer to, when he said, "Go, tell my disciples, and Peter." But he with the rest, we are sure, were all mortals alike. And they were also from time to time, assemblies of mortals to whom they were directed to speak the words of life.

And, my friends, the very name of life cannot but have a grateful, pleasant sound to them that dwell in the midst of deaths; to them that find the dark and dismal shadow of death

* Having a discourse in hand about this time, on Eph. iii. 10: "To the intent that now unto the principalities," &c.

continually spread over the whole region which they inhabit. When they find that death, in all its more gloomy appearances, hath so general a power over ministers and people, preachers and them that were to be preached unto; how pleasant is the mention of life, and such a life as surmounts, as exceeds the sphere where any death can come; a sphere by itself, all full of vitality, and in which death, or any shadow of death, can never find place! To be told of such a life, amidst surrounding deaths, cannot but be a pleasant and grateful thing to them that have sense enough in reference to their present case, and any faith in reference to the future. Indeed the power of death appears so much the more absolute, and its commission is seen to be of so much the greater amplitude and extensiveness, that it equally reaches to preachers and hearers; must equally reach such men, as these apostles were, and all the people they were to speak to the words of this life. But so much the higher and more glorious are the triumphs of that life, the words whereof are here mentioned. For it is evident these words do mean and intend a life, into which every thing of death and mortality is to be swallowed up. And therefore, though death do stop the breath of preachers, and the ears of hearers, it can never prevail against that word in which this life is wont to breathe. For though "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; yet the word of the Lord endureth for ever,—that word which by the gospel is preached unto us." 1 Pet. i. 24, 25.

This, indeed, was an ancient and very eminent minister of the word of life, whose decease and death occasions this solemnity, and this discourse, now at this time. And it ought to please us so much the more, that while we are now to consider and lament the death of such a preacher, the word he was wont to preach shall never die: and that we are to consider, at the same time, the life which such words do both concern and cause, is finally victorious over death in all the kinds and forms of it; a life hid with Christ in God; whereof he is the root and original, who avowed himself to be "the resurrection and the life;" and hath assured the partakers of this life, (whether preachers or hearers) that "when he who is their life shall appear, they shall also appear with him in glory." Col. iii. 3, 4. But so vain were the opposers of the preaching the words of this life, the obdurate, infidel Jews, that they thought to shut it up, and the preachers of it, within the walls of a prison: for that was the case here:—a sort of men full of malignity and bitterness, especially, as you read in the context, those of the sect of the Sadducees, who were the prevailing party at that time in their Sanhedrim, who believed nothing of a life to come, and had

drawn in the high priest to be on their side; "and who (as we read in the foregoing chap. *v.* 1, 2,) with the high priest, were grieved (pained, as the word signifies) that they (*viz.* Peter and John, though the former was orator) preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead;" these are (as they were before) the active, industrious instruments to restrain the preachers, and suppress the preaching the words of this life: "they, (as is said above) filled with indignation, laid hands on the apostles, threw them into the common prison," and there they think them and their word securely enclosed, and shut up together, that the world should never hear more of them. And did ever malice more befool itself? Could spite ever act or attempt a part more ridiculously absurd? Did they think to imprison celestial light? to bury immortal life? Heaven derides their attempt, and exposes them to be derided. For, as we are next told, "the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, (why made they not him their prisoner too?) and brought them forth, and said, (as follows in the text) Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people, all the words of this life." These two things are here very plain:—

First, That by *this* life is meant a peculiar sort of life; this life, τῆς ζωῆς ταύτης, "this same life," that was so highly predicated, and cried up at that time, so that no one could be in doubt what kind of life it was. It is true, out of those circumstances, when we use the phrase *of this life,* we ordinarily refer to the common affairs of this present life. But that it cannot be so understood here is most evident: the whole business under present consideration had quite another reference. The apostles had no controversy with the rulers of the Jews, about the affairs of this world, or of the best way of living a few days on earth; but what was the surest way of living for ever: and whether believing on Christ as the Messiah, he that was to come, were not that way. Their only contest with the people was, (as his own was, while he was yet among them) that they "would not come to him that they might have life." So here the angel of the Lord commanding these servants and apostles of his to "preach the words of this life," using the demonstrative term ταύτης, this same life, this way of living, or obtaining life, now so much disputed, and which began to make so great a noise in the world; cried up by some, decried by others: this sufficiently distinguished it. There were more obscure notices of it before, but now it was more clearly revealed, and more loudly to be spoken out. The manner of expression signifies it to be a peculiar and more excellent sort of life, very diverse from, and far transcending what is common to men; nor leaves us in any doubt of the angel's meaning.

Secondly, That "the words of this life" must necessarily

mean the gospel, *viz.* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whereof these were the ministers and apostles, bound by special office to diffuse to their uttermost this life and the words of it. Whence, therefore, for our own instruction, we may take up this twofold observation:—That the gospel contains, or is composed, and made up of, words of a peculiar and most excellent and noble kind of life: and—That it is the part of the ministers of this gospel, even by angelical suffrage and determination, as they have opportunity, to publish such words, *i. e.* to preach this gospel. In speaking to these two conjunctly, I shall particularly insist on these four heads, *viz.*—

I. To show how peculiar and how excellent a sort of life this is.

II. To show you how usually and fitly the gospel is so paraphrased, by the word or words of life, and of such a life.

III. To show you, that it cannot but be the part of the ministers of this gospel, to preach the words of this life.

IV. We shall also take the incidental occasion of observing to you, and insisting briefly on it, that they have the very suffrage of the angels of God to that purpose, that it is their part and business to preach "the words of this life."

And so shall make use of all.

I. We are to show the peculiar excellency of this life. That it is a peculiar sort of life, we have already noted from the angel's speaking so distinctively of it, calling it "this life," this same life, that is now every where so much spoken of, that is the matter of present discourse and of inquiry at this time. And that it is a most excellent, a most noble kind of life, the expression itself also doth not obscurely point out to us. That it is called *this life*, κατ' ἐξοχήν, life in the highest and most eminent sense. Never talk of this shadow, this dream of life, we are now passing through; but "speak to the people the words of this life;" this is a life worth speaking of. And the excellencies of it will appear in these several respects; as,—

1. That it is most manifestly *divine* life; and not at the common rate, as all life is from God; but as it not only proceeds from God, but resembles him, bears his peculiar impress upon it; upon which account it is called "the life of God," the divine life, in Eph. iv. 18, where the apostle, lamenting the sad and dismal state of the Gentile world, saith, that they were "alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in them, and the blindness of their hearts." It is, in a very special sense, a God-breathed life; not as the natural life and soul of man were breathed at first from God; but as there was a peculiar divinity in this life, not only as coming from him, but as having in it a chosen dependence on him, and tendency towards him,

by its own very essence, which the life of the soul of man, at first, had not. For if a voluntary dependence on God, and tendency towards him, had been essential to the natural life of a man's soul, it had been impossible they should ever have been lost. Such a posture God-ward was agreeable, and connatural, not essential. But it now is proper and peculiar to this life, though still not essential, as it never was, but more deeply fixed in the soul by grace than it was at first by nature, to tend to God, as it is by faith derived from him, (as is expressed, Hab. ii. 4; Heb. x. 38,) "The just shall live by faith;" and, (Rom. vi. 11,) "alive to God," as by love it works towards him, (Gal. v. 6, and ii. 19,) "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." The soul was never otherwise dead, than as it was dead towards God; and now, while in the present sense it lives, it lives by and to him: it being the steady, habitual determination of the soul God-ward, as its first and last, both in itself, and in the design of its implantation: and so is the imprinted image of the life of God himself, so far as the condition of a creature can admit, *i. e.* that as God lives of, and to himself, the soul, by this life, lives not in a merely natural, (which is common to all creatures) but in an apprehended, and designed dependence on God, and subordination to him.

2. It is a Christian as well as a divine life; a life that comes from God, not as Creator only, as all life, and as the life of our soul particularly at first did, with its very being, which involves life in itself; but a life that comes from Christ, as our Redeemer, as God-man, and Mediator betwixt God and man, whereof he is the immediate Author, and which he procured by his own death and by his resurrection from the dead, wherein we partake with him when we live this life. "I am crucified with Christ," saith the apostle, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal. ii. 20. "To me to live is Christ." Phil. i. 21. He is the Author and Fountain, as well as the end of this life. It is a life owing to the Redeemer dying, (1 Pet. ii. 24,) "He bare our sins, that we might live to righteousness." And we are taught, upon his dying, mentioned before, (Rom. vi. 11,) to "reckon ourselves dead to sin, and alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." And he is therefore said to be the immediate Donor of this life. John iv. 14. And "I am come," saith he, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John x. 10. The beginning, and improvements of this life to perfect plenitude, are all from him; and it is therefore said to be a "life hid with Christ in God." Col. iii. 3. He is said to be their life, (*v.* 4,) by all which Christ is signified to be the Author and Giver of this life. And he is as expressly said to be the end of it; his love in dying for us, constraining us

no more to "live to ourselves, but to him who died for us, and rose again." To which purpose are the words, Rom. xiv. 7—9. Again,—

3. It is a pure and holy life, such as, wheresoever it is, cannot suffer a man's soul customarily to mingle with the impurities and pollutions of this world. It is a life that carries up the soul into a purer region, where it draws purer breath. "If you live in the Spirit, walk also in the Spirit." Gal. v. 25.

4. It is an active, a laborious and fruitful life. They that live this life, live by union with Christ; and they that are united with him, abiding in him, bring forth much fruit, (John xv. 5,) when without him they could do nothing, as it there follows. They that live this life come thereupon, "their love abounding more and more in knowledge and in all judgment," or spiritual sense, (as the word αἰσθησις there used, may most fitly be rendered) discerning the things that differ, or approving, or preferring the things that are more excellent, "to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God." Phil. i. 9—11. This is the tendency of this life. It is a principle, in those in whom it is, tending to usefulness, and common good; and in order thereto, to growth and self-improvement. Again,—

5. It is a most generous sort of life, that disdains mean things; cannot feed upon earth and ashes. Such communications it must have, as are suitable to the life of a man's spirit. Herein stands the life of the spirit, in receiving and drawing in communications from God. They that live this life, "do hunger and thirst after righteousness, that they may be filled." Matt. v. 6. They "seek honour and glory and immortality," that they may finally attain "eternal life." Rom. ii. 7. This is a noble sort of life, that cannot be maintained, as it was not attained, by common means; that cannot live upon low, mean, and base things. They that are of the earth can live upon things that spring from the earth; but heaven-born ones must be continually maintained by heavenly communications, beams of light accompanied with vigorous influence that descend from thence.

6. It is a devoted life, sacred to God in Christ Jesus. "I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I may live to God." Gal. ii. 19. For, as in the principle, it is an habitual determination of the soul towards God, through Christ: so, in the exercise, it is a continual, or often repeated, self-devoting, or dedicating of ourselves accordingly; "a yielding ourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead." Rom. vi. 13. And so, (Rom. xiv. 7—9;) "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ

both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord, (be Owner, and so Ruler,) both of dead and living." Then, to whom should we live, but to him?

7. It is finally immortal, eternal life. It is so in its tendency; and it is so in its complete and perfect issue, in its mature state, eternal life; such (as) in the plenitude thereof, every thing of mortality is to be swallowed up. 2 Cor. v. 4. This is that which the aspirations and groans of renewed souls aim at; not barely to be unclothed, that were a mean thing, only to lay down this flesh that thereby we may escape the troubles, that, being in it, we are exposed to; that would go but a little way; but to be clothed upon with the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, furnished and enriched with all the delights and glories of the divine presence. Therefore our Saviour says of this life,—they that have the beginnings of it,—"They that drink of this water, it shall be in them a well of water springing up into life eternal." John iv. 14. The spiritual life that renewed souls now live, will be eternal life. They differ not in kind; but the one will grow up into the other. Therefore saith our Saviour, "I give my sheep eternal life." John x. 28.—I shall never have done giving, till I have improved the life I have given to eternal life, in which there will be no ebbings and flowings; but where life shall be perfectly pure, and in its full, mature state, without any mixture of death, or deadliness;—as any thing is said to be pure, that is full of itself, without the mixture of the least thing that is alien, or disagreeable thereto. Every thing of mortality shall be swallowed up in this life.

II. We are to note to you, according to the order proposed, the frequency, and aptitude of this paraphrase of the gospel, (words of life) or of what is equivalent thereto. For that the gospel is meant by it, is out of question. It is all one, as if the angel had said, "Go, preach the gospel." That some such phrase is usual to signify the gospel they can well tell, that are not strangers to the Bible. Sometimes this phrase is used to this purpose in the singular number, (as Phil. ii. 16,) "Holding forth the word of life:" sometimes in the plural, as in the 6th of John's gospel, *v.* 68, "Thou hast the words of eternal life." And sometimes instead of "life" is put "salvation," which is the same thing. To be saved, and to live this life is all one, whether you consider salvation begun, or salvation consummate: salvation begun, is but this life begun, "He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling." 2 Tim. i. 9. When he regenerates any, he is said to save them. "He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus iii. 5. And that complete, consummate salvation, should be signified by this life consummate and complete, is obvious and familiar; the

phrases salvation and eternal life, being so promiscuously used in Scripture to signify the same thing, that many places need not be quoted; (Acts xiii. 26,) "To you is the word of this salvation sent;" (Ephes. i. 13,) "The word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." And not perishing, or being saved, is expounded by having eternal, or everlasting life. John iii. 15—17. And for the aptness of it, or that the words that compose or make up the gospel are fitly called the words of life, will appear upon several accounts: as,—

1. Inasmuch as this word is the means of begetting this life, (James i. 18,) "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." In regeneration is infused the first principle of this life. And our Saviour prays for his disciples, (John xvii. 17,) "Sanctify them by thy truth; thy word is truth." And sanctification, in the rise and beginning of it, is nothing else but regeneration.

2. Inasmuch as this word improves this life, or is the means of improving it, and carrying it on towards its perfect state, (1 Pet. ii. 2,) "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." It is a means of our spiritual growth.

3. Inasmuch as this word carries in it the promise of this life in the most perfect state of it; (1 John ii. 25,) "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life;" (*ch.* v. 11, 12,) "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." This is a recorded thing, and is the final and terminative promise of the gospel. All the promises of it run into this.

4. The gospel is the rule of that judgment, by which all that shall partake therein are finally adjudged to eternal life, to this life in perfection. Matt. xxv. 46. Those that are absolved by our Lord Jesus Christ from the condemning sentence, and have the saving sentence passed upon them, of them it is said, "They, (*viz.* the righteous,) go into life eternal," just immediately from the tribunal of their judge; which sentence, and judgment, is according to this gospel. "God will judge the secrets of all hearts, according to my gospel." Wherever that impress is to be found,—gospel righteousness,—it distinguishes them that belong to Christ, and marks them out for eternal life. These things fall under the former observation; the other two, which are to succeed, belong to the latter.

III. That it is the part of the ministers of the gospel, as they can have opportunity, to preach the words of this life. For the making out of this, I shall speak to these two things: —1. To show, that it ought to be their design and end, to help

souls into this state of life : — 2. That they ought to preach the gospel, or the words of life, in order hereunto.—That ought to be their end; and this their work, in order to this end.

1. It ought to be their end, to help souls in this state of life. For,—

(1.) It is the end of their office, therefore, it ought to be their end. It would be unaccountable, that they should design a diverse end from the proper end of their office, or that they should not design that. Now the gospel is, by its designation, to be the ministration of spirit and life unto souls. 2 Cor. iii. 6.

(2.) They ought to design the bringing of souls to Christ, to get them into Christ, who is the Fountain of this life. "You will not come to me, that you might have life," saith our Saviour. John v. 40. And sure it is the business, and ought to be the design, of the ministers of the gospel, as much as in them is, to bring souls to Christ, and to counterwork the disinclination that is in men thereto. You will not come; but we will do all that in us lies to persuade you to come, and to come for this end, that you may live.

(3.) It undoubtedly ought to be their end, to have souls under their ministry, regenerated and born again. This they ought to design, and this is the very beginning of that state of life; and they are therefore entitled fathers, in reference to this their great design and business. If you "have had ten thousand instructors, yet you have not had many fathers; for I have begotten you to Christ," saith the apostle Paul. 1 Cor. iv. 15. You were regenerated by my ministry. And this ought to be every minister's design, that souls be regenerated by their ministry. So the same apostle speaks of that servant of Philemon's, and his own son Onesimus; "I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds." Phil. 10.

(4.) They ought to design the perfecting of souls unto eternal life. For this end was the ministry given, in all the degrees and kinds of it; *viz.* for the perfecting of the body of Christ, as you find, (Eph. iv. 11—13,) "And he gave some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And then is this new man perfect, when this new life is mature in him, and grown up to its fulness.

2. As that ought to be their end, so this ought to be their work, in order to that end, to preach this word of life as they can have opportunity. This will appear several ways; as,—

(1.) They are commanded so to do. Christ commands it,

"Go teach all nations," &c. Matt. xxviii. 19. His apostle gives it in charge, "even before God and our Lord Jesus Christ, to preach the word, to be instant in season, and out of season." 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. And in the former epistle, having before given the same charge, "to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine," (1 Tim. iv. 13;) he afterwards, in reference to this, and many other precepts, urges his charge before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, adding, "and the elect angels, to observe these things," &c. And here there is a command from God by an angel, "Go, and speak to the people in the temple the words of this life." The obligation by this precept, given the apostles with circumstances, lies in substance upon all that are ministers of the gospel of Christ.

(2.) They are directed how to do it, as well as commanded to do it. The great God instructs his prophet Ezekiel, "Say to them, As I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Words are put into his servants' mouths, even these words of life.

(3.) They are threatened if they neglect to do it; as in the 8th verse of that 33rd of Ezekiel, "If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand."

(4.) There are encouraging promises of great reward, (though that reward is all of grace) to them that succeed in this work. "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as stars." Dan. xii. 3.

(5.) They have special assistance, according as they depend and seek it from the blessed God, in this work. He abets them in it. Hereupon they strive "according to his power that works in them mightily." Col. i. 29. Though all have not assistance equally, yet all have what is suitable to the pleasure of the free Donor, when they faithfully engage and persist in this blessed and glorious work.

(6.) They are assured of acceptance in it, though they succeed not; so pleasing is this work to the blessed God, the endeavouring to bring souls into this state of life. "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord." Isa. xlix. 5. This, indeed, is spoken principally of Christ himself; but subordinately of all that serve him in this work. So saith the apostle Paul, (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16,) "We are unto God a sweet savour (or odour rather, as the word ὀσμὴ more properly signifies) of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the odour of death unto death: to the other the odour of life unto life." And this lay with a mighty weight upon his spirit. O that ever we should be the savour of

death unto death to any! "Who is sufficient for these things?" But whether of life or death, we are a sweet odour to God in Christ, as to both, when he sees the sincerity of our hearts, and how fain we would fetch souls out of the state of death into this life. So grateful and pleasant to him is the work effected of saving souls, that the attempt and desire of it is not ungrateful.

IV. We are farther to show, that this is the part of the ministers of the gospel, to preach the words of this life, even by angelical suffrage and declaration. We have the concurrence in one, of that whole most excellent order, (for among them can be no disagreeing votes or sentiments,) to put us out of all doubt that this is our business. And that is a great additional enforcement of it upon us. But here it is requisite to do these two things:—to show how far only the angels can be concerned in a matter of this nature: and—that though they are concerned no further, yet we have here sufficient evidence of their suffrage, and complacential approbation.

1. How far only they can be concerned in matters of this nature.

(1.) Not so far as to do this work themselves. They are not to be the preachers of this gospel; God did not think that fit. If that had been the known and stated course, the apostles might have replied, upon their being sent to preach this gospel, You that are an immortal angel, whom no violence can touch or hurt, go you and preach this gospel. No, they were to do no such work: by the counsel of Heaven this work is committed to men. In that marvellous conversion of the apostle Paul in his way to Damascus, he is sent to Ananias in the city, to be told by him what he was to do. Acts ix. 6. And when there was that special regard had to Cornelius's prayers and alms, that God was resolved he should not want the express discovery of the gospel of Christ; he sends an angel to him, not to instruct him himself, but to direct him to send for Peter, as your find, Acts x. and the following chapter, who was to speak to him words by which he and his house were to be saved; as appears by comparing those two chapters together. So that they are not to do this work themselves. Nor,—

(2.) Are they so far concerned, as to confer the office. The office of a preacher doth not come from an angel. When the very angel saith this to these apostles, they were apostles and ministers of Christ before; he doth not make them such; nor is that God's way of conveying the office. No, it comes from Christ himself originally: he gave the first commission, "Go, and teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. So that the same office

comes from Christ, to the end of the world. Though the persons that first received the commission were to continue but their own short time, yet the commission is continued to such as should, in several ages, succeed them, and still from Christ; but by other appointed means, which he hath settled, and which remain stated in his church; those that are in that office of preachers or ministers themselves, conveying it to others, who shall, according to fixed gospel-rules, be found qualified for it. But the business of angels, wherein God hath been pleased to employ them in reference to these affairs of his church, is only sometimes to determine circumstances, as the angel here to these apostles; Now is the time, "go forthwith to the temple, and preach to the people the words of this life." The obligation to the thing did not come from the angel, but the determination of the season, and place, for that time. So we find as to other circumstances. The apostle Paul is directed by an angel appearing in the likeness of a man of Macedonia, to go and preach to the Macedonians, saying to him, "Come over, and help us." Acts xvi. 9. Thus God does when he thinks fit; but we are not warranted to expect the signification of his mind this way; he having appointed other means that are sufficient. But yet,—

2. Notwithstanding that angels are concerned no further than you have heard; yet that they may be concerned, and have been concerned so far, is an evidence of their complacential approbation of the thing. And this will appear partly by the consideration of the nature and temper of those excellent creatures; and partly, by the consideration of several concurrent things, of which the holy Scripture gives us notice.

(1.) Consider their very nature, unto whom their sanctity and their benignity is their very nature, in this their confirmed state. We are not to think that this angel, this messenger sent from God, conveyed his message as if it passed through a dead trunk, that could be no way affected therewith; but as one highly savouring his message, taking great complacency in it. It was pleasant to him in the delivery, thus to direct these apostles of our Lord, "Go to the temple, preach to the people the words of this life;" your immediate call is from the prison to the temple, to teach the people how they may be set at liberty from the bonds of death, worse bonds than yours. So much we may collect from their habitual sanctity and devotedness to God; the dutiful, ready compliance, and conformity of their will to the good and acceptable will of their Maker and Lord, and the peculiar benignity of their nature, that they were glad to be thus employed; it was welcome work to any one of them that carried this message.

(2.) Several other things concur, mentioned in the holy Scrip-

ture, to make us apprehend their complacential approbation of so grateful an errand; as,—

[1.] The solemn jubilee that they held upon our Lord's descent into this world upon this saving design. Then an innumerable multitude of the heavenly host are brought in triumphing together, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and goodwill towards men." Luke ii. 14. This appears to have been their common sense, and so, no doubt, was the sense of this angel at this time. They all celebrate the descent of our Lord upon his saving design, coming down into this world to be the light of men, as it is expressed, (John i. 4,) "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." A luminous life it was, that he came to bless this world with. And when the angels did celebrate this descent of his, with so much joy and jubilation, it was in pursuance of a proclamation that had before passed through all the spacious heavens; when he brought his first begotten Son into the world, it was said, "and let all the angels of God worship him." Heb. i. 6. They were all to adore the Redeemer, as such, because he vouchsafed to be a Redeemer to such as we were, buried and lost in death.

[2.] Consider the ordinary stated course of their ministration. What that is, and whither it tends, you find expressed, (Heb. i. 14,) "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Heirs of salvation, and heirs of eternal life are the same, as hath been noted before. This they in their stated course pursue; this is the design of their ministry, to be helpful to those who are to be the heirs of salvation.

[3.] We may collect it from the joy that they express for the success of the gospel in this kind: where they observe it to succeed, if in the conversion but of one sinner, (Luke xv. 10,) "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, if but one sinner repenteth." The heavens are hereupon filled with joy, the angels rejoice that one is now added to their happy number, gained from under the power of death and Satan, the great destroyer of souls.

[4.] The prospect they have, that all that partake of this life here in the beginnings of it, shall partake with them in the eternal life and blessedness of the future state. All that are here converted, and regenerated, they are by degrees coming to the "general assembly, and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Heb. xii. 22, 23. All this is plain evidence that there is a complacential concurrence and suffrage of angels to the ministers of Christ doing their work, preaching the words of this life according as they have opportunity.

The use of this, you may easily apprehend, might be vastly copious, but we must be within necessary limits.

1. We may learn hence, that such as the gospel is, such ought our attendance to it to be. There ought to be a correspondence between what the gospel in itself is, and our manner of attending the dispensation of it. Doth it consist of words of life? then so ought it to be attended to, as containing the words of life, the words of this life, this noble, and most excellent sort of life. Methinks this should strike the consciences of some: I wonder if it do not of any! How few do attend the dispensation of this gospel, as apprehending it to contain the words of such a life! In what agonies of spirit should we attend upon the dispensation of this gospel, if we understand the matter so! They are the words of the most excellent kind of life that we hear, when we hear the gospel of Christ truly preached. This ought to carry a sting and pungency with it to the hearts of such as upon inquiry, When did I attend upon the gospel, as containing the words of life? cannot give to their own hearts and consciences any satisfying account. Let the inquiry proceed further: Have I got life by it? Did it ever enter into my heart, as the word of life? Did I ever so much as design, expect, or wish that it should? What shall be said to such, that if they answer truly, must give it against themselves?

2. We may learn hence, that when God is pleased to put such a dignity upon poor mean men, as to speak to men by them, and about so great concerns, the affairs of this life, things so high and sublime as the words of this life import: we ought hereupon both to acknowledge God's wisdom and compassion towards us; and be sensible of our obligation highly to esteem them for their work's sake.

(1.) We ought to acknowledge the wisdom and compassion of God, that he hath chosen this way to treat with men: that he doth not always, as he did once speak, to the Israelites, by thunder and lightning, and a terrible tempest, and a voice of words, which voice they that heard, entreated they might never hear it any more; and thereupon desired Moses that he would speak to them from God, for they could not hear such a voice, but they must die for it. No; God speaks to men by men like themselves, who have the same nature, and the same interest, that are to be upon the same bottom with them, and preach the same gospel of salvation, by which they are to be saved themselves. And,—

(2.) We are to honour such as he puts this honour upon, for their work's sake; "to esteem them highly in love" on this account. 1 Thess. v. 13. "How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings!" Rom. x. 15. How welcome their approaching steps! How graceful is their motion towards us!

They that labour in the word and doctrine, are upon that account worthy of double honour, (1 Tim. v. 17,) and all this not for their own sake, but for their work's sake. For the greatest instruments that ever were in the world employed in this work, what are they? That great apostle, Paul, counts himself as nothing; though not behind the chiefest apostles, yet a mere nothing; so he nullifies himself, diminishes himself to a thing of naught, a perfect nullity. Elsewhere, "I laboured more abundantly than they all," saith he, "yet not I!" 1 Cor. xv. 10. "Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" 1 Cor. iii. 5. "Who is Paul?" As if he would say, it cannot be told; too little a thing to be seen or known, or that any notice should be taken of him. We cannot, indeed, have too mean thoughts of ourselves; so little we are, compared with the greatness of our work: and none can have so mean thoughts of us as we ought to have of ourselves, who should know ourselves best, and better understand our own little value, than any others can. But when any esteem the ministers of Christ for their work's sake, they only express a respect to Him that sends them, to the message they bring, and to their own souls, that are in such a way so tenderly cared for.

3. We may learn hence, how peculiarly spiritual and intellectual this life is, which such words do so nearly concern. Do you know any life besides, that is produced by words, and by words maintained and improved? No words can otherwise affect us, than as they convey a sense into our minds so as to be understood, and into our hearts and spirits, being inwardly received and believed there. This must be an intellectual and most pure sort of life, that depends upon words, that can be begotten by words, and improved by words, and perfected by words. It shows it to be a sort of life far above the sphere of this bodily life; this bodily life is not to be begotten or maintained by words. You cannot by words recover life into a dead finger, much less into a dead corpse. And again, what admirable words are those that can make us live! transmit life into the very centre, and make our hearts live! It is true, it is not the mere words, but divine breath animating those words that begets this life; but that still proves it to be a spiritual life. The divine word hath a peculiarity with it: that, indeed, through the efficacy of a divine blessing accompanying it, makes the ordinary means available for the sustaining of our natural life; "man lives not by bread only, but by the word that proceeds out of God's mouth;" much more is his vital word necessary to the production and maintenance of the life of our souls.

4. Hence we may collect how dismal and sad their case is, that sit from time to time with dead souls under the words of

life! Year after year there are words of life spoken and breathed forth, in those assemblies where they are hearers; yet when the truth of the matter comes to be told, must say, "I feel nothing of this life in my soul; my heart is dead still, is still a stone or a clod! No words that I have heard, have awakened, quickened, melted, purified my heart, warmed and inflamed my heart! Dead I was in trespasses and sins, and so I remain, notwithstanding all the words of this life which I have heard!" This is a dismal case; when it was God's chosen way to make his word the ministration of spirit and life to souls, if it do not breathe in these words, wherein can it be expected to breathe?

5. We may collect, hence, that if, by angelical suffrage, it ought to be the business of ministers to preach the words of this life; then, undoubtedly, by angelical suffrage, the words of this life are words worth the hearing; worth attending and listening to. An angel would have been loath to have been the messenger to these great worthies, the apostles of our Lord, charging them to go and preach in the temple to the people a jargon of impertinent, idle stories. No; but when he saith, "Go, and preach to the people the words of this life," that leaves the matter out of all doubt, that here was a ready concurrence both in judgment and complacence of the angel hereto; and that, in full effect, he pronounced these things worth listening to. Though we cannot suppose him so assuming, as to think he could by his approbation add any thing real to His authority who sent him; yet, as to the reputation of the message with us, it is not without its weight: as it makes a great difference, whether a prince signify his mind, in this or that affair, by a person of honour, or by a footboy. Therefore, when any of you have heard the words of this life with neglect and disregard, you have set your judgment against the judgment, at once, of the great God and of the glorious angels of God; it signifies as if you thought yourselves wiser than God, and than any angel in heaven. They esteem these words worthy the most serious attention and regard; but you look upon them as trifles, not worth the regarding. Worms of this earth, mushrooms lately sprung up, mean abjects but beginning to crawl, set their mouth and heart against heaven; oppose their rash, presumptuous judgment to the judgment of the supreme Lord, and of those wise sages, the blessed and holy angels, that stand always in the presence of God and hear his wisdom! The vanities of this world are thought worth the regarding; but the words of eternal life are counted unworthy to be regarded or listened to! What absurd insolence is this! to persist in a practical judgment, so directly contrary to the judgment of the wise and holy angels; and, as is evident, of God himself, who

sent this message! When such men do meet, is not all their talk vanity? running upon the things only of the earth and time, mere impertinency at best to such as have souls to save! But also are not bold, profane jests, about things most sacred, usual ingredients in their conversation; *viz.* what is most opposite to such a design? These things, they reckon, sound well in a coffee-house, or a tavern: but how do they sound in the heavenly places, whither the report presently flies up, as may be collected from Eph. iii. 10, "To the principalities and powers in the heavenly places is made known by the church, (*i. e.* in, or about the affairs of the church) the manifold wisdom of God?" which cannot but imply their animadversion upon the follies of men, counterworking that wisdom. Nor can the censure of so excellent creatures, and of so bright understandings, be lightly esteemed by any, but most stupid minds. And if such an addition signify nothing, why doth the apostle, having given a charge before God, and before Jesus Christ, add, "and before the elect angels?"

6. Learn further, that if any servants of Christ have faithfully, in a continued course, to the end of their time, been intent upon this business, preaching the words of this life, their memory ought to be very precious to us when they are gone: they who have been employed in this work, called to it by God; it is all one whether his mind were signified to them by an angel, or any other way. For it was not an angel that gave the authority, but only conveyed this particular command, as hath been noted. When God, in his ordinary method, hath called forth a servant of his to preach the words of this life, and he hath laboured in it faithfully to the uttermost, the memory of such a one ought to be very dear and precious to all to whom he was known, and that have had opportunity of hearing from him the words of eternal life, or that shall receive a faithful account of him. We are so directed and taught, (Heb. xiii. 7, 8,) "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." And he still as much requires the same thing as ever he did.

And truly such a servant of Christ was this my dear and worthy brother, the very reverend Mr. Vink, whom God hath lately taken from among us. He was the son of a noted citizen of Norwich; nor will equal judges of his true worth think it a despicable degree of lustre added to that city, that such a man was born there. His ancestors were early Protestants, when the Reformation was struggling for a birth in Flanders: where, when the persecution against that profession began to rage, the zeal and fervour of their religion not admitting to be concealed,

or suffering them to temporize, Providence ordered their seasonable transportation to that city of refuge, which became native to their following posterity, and among them to this worthy man; who hath often been heard to say, "He reckoned it a greater honour to have descended from so pious ancestors, than if he could have derived his pedigree from the greatest princes." He was, indeed, designed for multiplying the offspring of the everlasting Father; and seemed formed for this work from his entrance upon the stage of this world; so were those things very early interwoven in the frame and temper of his soul, that were to be the elements of great future usefulness in this kind of service. For, in his very tender years there appeared very early religion, great seriousness, an habitual awe and reverence of the divine majesty; insomuch that none could observe, when he first began to be a fearer of God. Which pious disposition of mind was in conjunction with so great a propensity and addictedness to books, with desire of learning, as was very unusual at that age, even in his childhood.

And very early was his preparatory endeavour for that noble employment to which he afterwards betook himself. For as nature and grace appeared to have betimes combined to frame him as an instrument for such service; it was soon very evident that in the former, God had inlaid a deeper foundation, enduing him with singular parts, above the common rate; which as they came gradually to shine out, in the great improvements he had made under instruction in a little time, there appeared such quickness of apprehension, solidity of judgment, strength of memory, quickness of fancy, without exorbitancy, as are seldom found to meet together: and these were accompanied with so spontaneous diligence beyond what the usual methods of education obliged him to, that in his tender years, while yet under the eye of his parents, they have thought it requisite sometimes to hide his books, lest he should injure himself by over intent and close study: so that he was ripe for a university much younger than others ordinarily are. Accordingly he was sent up in his fourteenth year to Cambridge, where he remained many years a fellow and great ornament of Pembroke Hall, even beyond the time of his taking the degree of bachelor of divinity; in which time he had treasured up a large stock of all useful learning, and might be fitly styled a universal scholar. But religion, governing the whole course of his studies, kept him steady to his great end; and made him most intent upon such things as might render him most useful for his designed work,—the original languages, with such rational learning as was subservient to theology,—and then theology, and the study of the holy Scriptures themselves.

For diversion he was no stranger to history, *viz.* civil, which

was fundamental, but more diverting; as well as ecclesiastical, which was more immediately necessary to his purpose. And among his other accomplishments, his skill and accuracy in the Latin tongue was, as I have been otherwise informed, much remarked in the university; so that the professor in the chair, when he took the above-mentioned degree, (as was reported by the eye and ear-witness) disputing *pro forma* with him, after he had somewhat longer than ordinary opposed him, he still answering in neat and elegant Latin, said, "Mr. Vink, I only so long continued my opposition to you, to give you opportunity to entertain the auditory with that judgment and eloquence, which have appeared in your answers." And that to express himself politely in that tongue was become habitual and familiar to him, appeared in his writing, in that language, a weekly account of the more remarkable things that occurred to him in the course of his life; which, since his death, hath come to my view; though in such a case a man only writes to himself, yet I have observed therein such strictures of elegancy, both of style and phrase, as signified it was become impossible to him, if he writ any thing, not to write handsomely, and as might become both a Christian and a scholar.

This narrative was continued until his growing infirmities put a period to it, some months sooner than to his life itself. The mention of it here, you see, was occasional, and somewhat digressive. Therefore, to return; when he had passed through the long course of his academical studies and employment, London, whither his fame had now reached, could not long want such a man. Hither he was called; and here he shone a bright light in two churches of this city successively, *viz.* Saint Michael's in Cornhill, which he easily quitted upon another's claim; more from an indisposition to contend, which was little suitable to his calm temper, than from defect of title, could his friends, that so highly valued him, have prevailed with him to admit of its being disputed; but they had the less reason to be urgent upon him, for that he was so immediately chosen to a neighbour church, where he continued preaching the words of this life till August 24, 1662, when, not satisfied with some things in the act that then took place, he calmly quitted his station, but not his ministry; which he never refused to exercise, when desired, in distinct assemblies, when they had only the favour of a connivance. But his more ordinary course was, after he was deprived of his former public liberty, to preach for many years, as the apostle Paul did, in his own hired house; whither his great abilities, and most lively, vigorous ministry, drew an assembly not inconsiderable; whereto he both dispensed the word, and (to such as were qualified, and desirous) the sacrament of the Lord's supper, at certain seasons. And

this course he continued, especially that of preaching in his house, till bodily disability made it impossible to him; which then he deeply lamented. Yet did he not decline all communion with the established church. Whereupon he had experience of the haughty, supercilious temper of some men's spirits, on the one hand and the other; who assume to themselves an interdicted, unhallowed liberty of sitting in judgment upon other men's consciences; and adventure to censure them, as men of no conscience, that abandon not their own, to follow theirs; taking notice, sometimes, with just regret, that he incurred the anger of two sorts of men; of some, that he went no further; of others, that he went so far.

Looking into his memoirs, I found that rich vein of religion and godliness running throughout the whole, that I think no serious man could read them without being very deeply affected therewith. Week after week, whatsoever was more remarkable, relating to himself, his family, or the church of God, is punctually set down, and intermixed with most pious ejaculations, "My God, and my All." If any trouble occurred, "Yet God is mine, and I am his." You every where discern the breathings of a holy, devout soul. Ejaculatory supplications are very frequent for his relatives and domestics; "The Lord sanctify them, the Lord wash them, the Lord protect them, lead them by thy truth and counsels." On all occasions that spirit of prayer, and universal godliness, discovers itself all along, mixed with the greatest tenderness and compassion that I have any where met with. If any one were sick in his family, his dear consort, his son, daughter, or daughter-in-law, his most beloved brother, or if a servant, male or female, it is noted down, with his *suspiria*, the breathing forth of earnest supplications on their behalf: and afterwards upon their recovery, most solemn thanksgivings. But if any one died, then such self-humiliation, such lying low before the Lord, such yielding compliance with the divine pleasure, with the design of spiritual improvement thereby, as I believe, hath been seldom seen. And in whatsoever case, there are expressions of a steady trust in God in reference to all his affairs, both of this world and that which is to come. If any difficulties came in view, upon the mention thereof he presently subjoins, "But I will trust in God; he will show me the plain and the right way, wherein he would have me to go." His charity to the distressed was always flowing, and very exemplary; but much more the pity which wrought in his heart towards such, whose miseries and necessities were such, as it was never possible for him to relieve proportionably to the largeness of his soul. He in the mean time suffered the calamity of every one whose case came to his notice. His humility was such, as did shine through all his other excel-

lencies. He was, indeed, a great man in every one's eyes but his own. No one ever thought meanly of him, that knew him, but himself. His love of solitude and retirement was peculiarly remarkable. No man had more opportunity, in his circumstances, to multiply friends and acquaintance; but I never knew any one who minded and studied it less; yet where once he was acquainted, there could not be a more pleasant and delectable friend. It was remote from him to seek acquaintance: nor did he need; it was enough for him to receive those that were so kind to themselves, as to seek his. And it is evident, that love of solitude is peculiar to those, who, through the grace of God, and especially, a sort of self-benignity, have been capable of becoming good company to themselves. For empty persons, or such as are only full of malignity, men of ill minds, and conscious to themselves of ill design, for such I do not wonder, that, of all things, they care not to be alone. They can never be grateful company to themselves. But he had laid up such a treasure of human and divine knowledge, that I know not where he could find pleasanter company than his own. And his special gratitude for divine mercies was very observable. I have found, in his memorials, he was much in admiring God, that he had done so much for him and his, and more especially for the helps he had from heaven in the performance of his ministerial work. "Blessed be God for the assistance he gave me such a day.—And very particularly at the Lord's supper.—Blessed be God for what hath passed between him and me at his table; blessed be God that his bonds have taken hold of my soul!"

Though his temper, and the chosen circumstances of his life, kept off from him in great part more frequent occasions of communicating to the world the rich treasures wherewith his mind was stored, yet when such occasions have occurred, he neglected them not. But while, through his own continuing dissatisfaction, he remained excluded from a public station; besides his constant ministerial labours, in a private way, he embraced other occasions that Providence offered of doing such work as became much more public, and wherein he did more than speak from a pulpit to a single congregation of hearers; speaking from the press to the world, as any should think fit to be his readers. Divers of his excellent sermons have been long extant to common view, wherein "being dead, he yet speaketh." An account of which, though elsewhere given,* it is not unfit here to repeat. As, before his ejection, he had one sermon in the first volume of the Morning Exercises, preached in the church of Saint Giles, upon original sin; so after it, he

* In Mr. Calamy's Abridgment, &c.

had another, in that against popery, upon the grounds of the Protestants' separation from the church of Rome. Another, upon the worth of the soul, in the continuation of the Morning Exercise Questions; with another, on gospel grace the best motive to holiness, vol. 4. And to these I must add that valuable performance of his on the Acts of the holy apostles, in the supplement to Mr. Poole's annotations of the Bible (by mistake ascribed to another worthy person, who hath to me disclaimed it, and assured me it was Mr. Vink's.) And it is a satisfaction to me, that I have his concurring judgment in the interpretation of this text: who writing upon it, when he could little apprehend his own funeral sermon was, so many years after, to be preached from it, tells us, that though some admit of an hypallage in the expression "the words of this life," and join the pronoun to the other substantive, reading it, "These words of life," because by this life is ordinarily understood the present temporary life, as in 1 Cor. xv. 19; yet, he says, there needs not this translatious sense; by this life the angel might very well understand, eternal life, and salvation, for that was it which the Sadducees denied, and for the preaching of which life the apostles were imprisoned. To which purpose also the learned Dr. Hammond speaks, in his annotations on the same place.

The words of this life he preached to the last, and lived it, in its initial state, as he now lives it, (being, in the kind, the same life) in its perfect, eternal state. And we may now put in him with those holy men, (as he speaks in the argument, which he prefixes to this book) who having lived answerably to their profession and hope, do, when we read these things, seem to speak unto us, and tell us, (what they say was inscribed upon the statue of some deified hero) *si feceritis sicut nos, eritis sicut nos;* "if ye shall live as we have done, and suffer as we have suffered, then shall you be (glorious and happy) as we are." And yet, such a life as this must end; a life transacted at such a rate! Whither should this carry and direct all our thoughts and aspirings? I bless God we have such instances of many, of whom we must say, it is impossible but that such men are got into a good state: a great confirmation of the truth of our religion. We must be assured such a one cannot be lost in a grave; his works must follow him into a higher region. But I add,—

7. That, since they who do preach the words of life, do yet themselves die, let us attend upon their ministry accordingly. We have such and such to preach to us the words of life; but they are mortal men, and must not preach to us always. Therefore, let such a thought take place; take we heed that we do not lose them, while we have them: O let the words of life, which they preach, be entertained as such! Our Saviour saith of John

the baptist, "He was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." You can rejoice in no such light but for a season. You may say, if such and such that are now preaching to us the word of life do drop, God can raise up others in their room to preach the same word; and I hope he will, that when such a one as I drop, he will raise up some other to preach to you at another rate, with more warmth, and vigour, and success, than ever I have done. But yet you are to consider that you are mortal too, as well as we. And admit you have those who shall far exceed them that have gone before; yet you know not how short your time may be under them. Therefore, whatever your hand finds out to do in this kind, do it with it all your might. Labour to catch at the words of this life, as once one in distress did at words of a much inferior concern, and when a meaner life hung in doubt. We are continually hovering between life and death! How fast are we dropping away from one another! Every one that dies from among us, doth, even dying, utter such a voice. Amidst so many deaths, admit, draw in as vital breath, the words of this life. Dread, as the most frightful of all deaths, that the very words of this life should be to you the savour of death unto death.

LETTERS AND PAPERS

ON

NONCONFORMITY.

A LETTER

WRITTEN OUT OF THE COUNTRY TO A PERSON OF QUALITY IN THE CITY

WHO TOOK OFFENCE AT THE

SERMON OF DR. STILLINGFLEET,

DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S,

BEFORE THE LORD MAYOR.

Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.—Gal. vi. 1.

Johannes Coletus, Decanus quem dicunt Divi Pauli,—apud suos Anglos alter pene Apostolus Paulus habitus est.—*Polyd. Virgil.*

Sir,

I perceive your mind is disturbed; which my friendship with you can no more let me be unconcerned for, than if I heard you were sick, nor less to study your relief. Such may be the cause and measure of your passion, and such the disproportion between the one and the other, as to need it a great deal more, though yet, perhaps, to deserve it less. For your sickness might be your infelicity only, but a perturbation that exceeds its cause cannot but be your fault. Which kind of evil, though it be much greater, and therefore needs no application for the removing of it; yet it can challenge less help from another, because you are your own afflicter, and may, by dependence on divine help, when you please, cure yourself, which no man else can do for you. But if another may contribute towards it, by laying before you apt considerations which you are yourself to apply, you know you are to expect it from no man's good will more than mine. If indeed you expect much from my ability, that is another fault, entirely your own, and whereto you could have no temptation.

Thus much I freely profess to you, that I have a great value of an equal temper and composure of mind, not apt to be unduly moved, or entertain any thing that occurs with indecent perturbation, or other resentment than is due and suitable to the occasion; and desire it more than either to be in the best external circumstances, or not to be in the worst. As I wish for myself, I wish for you; and therefore am will-

ing to place my endeavour accordingly, where it may be in a possibility of effecting somewhat to your advantage, and where it is most desirable it should.

In the present case, the fault I find with you is, that your resentment of the matter you complain of is undue, and not proportionable to the occasion. And whereas you seem to labour under the distemper and excess of a twofold passion, of fear, lest a just and good cause (as you and I do both account) should suffer some great prejudice, by this opposition of Dr. Stillingfleet; and of anger, that he from whom better things might have been expected, should attempt any thing in this kind: I shall hereupon endeavour to represent to you the causelessness both of your fear, and (in great part) of your anger: and first defend the cause against Dr. Stillingfleet, and then add somewhat in defence of Dr. Stillingfleet against you. *First.*—As to the former, we are,—

I. To give the plain state of it, with the Doctor's judgment against us in it.

II. To discuss the matter with the Doctor, and show; 1. The indefensibleness of that judgment: and 2. The inefficacy of the Doctor's attempt to defend it.

I. It is first necessary that we have a true state of the cause itself before our eyes; which is plainly this,—That as there are very great numbers of people, beyond what the ministers of parishes, in divers places, can possibly perform ministerial duty unto; so there are withal very many that cannot be satisfied in conscience to entrust their souls and their spiritual concernments to the pastoral care and conduct of the parochial ministry only; though they generally have a very reverend esteem of divers who are of it; do, many of them, very frequently partake of some part of their labours, and rejoice in them as great ornaments and real blessings to the Christian church. But these are very unproportionable in number to the necessities of the people, and are by legal restraints tied up one way, as they by conscientious, are another, in respect of some principal parts of Christian worship; without which they should be visibly in the condition of pagans.

There are also many persons who have been devoted to the service of God and his church in the ministerial function, some of them in the way which now obtains, others in a way which this reverend author did not disapprove, who are not satisfied in conscience about the terms upon which they might have continued, or may be admitted parochial incumbents. So that here are numerous flocks scattered without pastors,—here are many pastors without flocks.

The people, it is true, on whose behalf these papers are more especially written, are in this destitute condition by their own scruples. Nor is it the present design to justify all those scruples. But they are, with many, of long continuance, and, for aught appears, unremovable. If they should be deferred, and bidden to use patience, while such further endeavours are used with them as this sermon contains, yet death will have no patience, nor be deferred. So that there are multitudes passing into eternity out of a Christian nation, having no benefit of Christian ordinances; no means of instruction in the truth and doctrines of the Christian religion, in order to their salvation. The course which is *de facto* taken in this distress for their relief, is that which the reverend author bends himself against in his sermon. And there are two sorts of per-

sons concerned in it. The people; who, rather than return to the state of paganism, implore the help of these unemployed ministers, desiring them to perform the duty of Christian ministers towards them: and the ministers, who, rather than they should cease to be Christians, or themselves always cease from the work of ministers, comply with their desires, and, as they can, allow them their desired help.

This author doth more directly and professedly speak to the case of the people; to that of the ministers, only by way of oblique reflection. You and I who (among the former) do often partake in the worship and ordinances of God, in the separate assemblies, (though we are not so squeamish as to balk the public, nor so unjust and ungrateful as not to thank God for the excellent advantages that are sometimes to be met with there) are both concerned, and led by the Doctor's discourse, to consider what is said as to this case of ours. Which yet I would have us consider not so appropriately, as to exclude them our very compassionate consideration, that are more pinched and confined to narrower limits, by their own scruples, than we are; and whose number you cannot but apprehend to be so great, as to call for a very large compassion in considering their case.

It is indeed a case of far-prospect, and which looks down upon after-times. You know how easily it may be deduced all along from the beginning of the English reformation, when some very eminent among our reformers were not well satisfied with the ceremonial part of the constitution settled at that time; how an unsatisfied party hath gradually increased from age to age among the common people also. They are now grown very numerous. And unless some very overpowering impression upon men's minds, (nor reasonably to be expected according to common measures) should alter the case, it is still likely to increase in succeeding ages. You are not ignorant that no one thing is more commonly scrupled by this unsatisfied party, than the addition of that federal rite in the dedicating of their children to God, the signing them with the sign of the cross, which many (how justly or unjustly I am not now to discuss) esteem so sinful a practice, that, rather than admit it, they will choose not to offer their children to baptism. Nor is it in itself of less weight (perhaps it is of much greater) that, in this solemn dedication, they have no opportunity of performing the parental duty, of covenanting with God on behalf of their own children, but that part (with the exclusion of themselves) is to be done by others whom God hath not concerned in the business; and who, after the solemnity is over, are never like to concern themselves. And there are divers other scruples besides, in reference to this and other parts of worship, that, with multitudes, are in no great probability to admit of cure.

Now let us see what the reverend Doctor's judgment is upon this state of our case, who dissent from the established way, whether the people, or their ministers; and that both concerning what they do, and what, by consequence from his judgment upon their case, they are to suffer. For the practice of the people in this case, (at least the negative part of it) he hath some charity in his censure; for in their declining to join in the public assemblies he believes them generally to practise according to their judgment, as he professes, (page 37,) of his sermon: for the ministers, most of them, none at all, who, as he says in the same place, he believes go against theirs. His words are, "I dare say,

if most of the preachers at this day in the separate meetings were soberly asked their judgments, whether it were lawful for the people to join with us in the public assemblies, they would not deny it; and yet the people that frequent them, generally judge otherwise. For it is not to be supposed, that faction among them should so commonly prevail beyond interest."

But his judgment concerning what both are to undergo is, eventually and in the sequel, as he states their case, much more hard in respect of the people, who cannot relieve themselves; whereas the ministers, according to the notion he hath of them, presently may.

We are to attend chiefly to what he says in reference to the lay people, and shall consider,—How severe he is towards them; and—How well consistent he is therein with himself.

1. His severity towards those of us in respect of what we practise, who put ourselves under the pastoral care of other than the parochial ministers, is to be seen in what he proposes to himself to evince, (page 20,) *viz.* That our proceeding to the forming of separate congregations, *i.e.* under other teachers, and by other rules, than what the established religion allows, is the present case of separation which he intends to consider, and to make the sinfulness and mischief of it appear. He doth, you see, in short, absolutely pronounce our practice in this case to be sinful and mischievous.

Now it is hence also to be collected, how hard things he would have us suffer, upon supposition of our only remaining unsatisfied to join ourselves into the parochial communion. He doth not, indeed, bespeak for us gibbets, whipping-posts, or dungeons; nor (directly) any thing grievous to our flesh. But to such as consider themselves to have souls made for an everlasting state, the doom which his words imply in the mentioned place cannot be thought gentle. Which that you may apprehend the more distinctly, observe that he hath nothing to say against our bare suspending communion in some particular rites which we modestly scruple, while we use it in what we judge lawful, page 20, (whereas, page 37, he supposes us generally to judge it unlawful to join in the public assemblies) to which purpose he also speaks in his late dialogues, page 171 and 172, (giving his antagonist an account of what he had said in his *Irenicum* to the matter now in discourse) *viz.* That some scrupulous and conscientious men, after all endeavours used to satisfy themselves, may remain unsatisfied as to the lawfulness of some imposed rites, but dare not proceed to positive separation from the church, but are willing to comply in all other things save in those rites which they still scruple: and concerning these he puts the question, whether such bare nonconformity do involve such men in the guilt of schism. And this he confesses he resolved negatively, (approving or not disavowing that resolution.) Thus far, indeed, he well agrees with himself; and seems to have no quarrel with us.

But consider the fatal consequence. He well knows, that if we suspend communion in the rite of the cross, (upon our never so modest scruple) we cannot have our children ministerially dedicated to God in the ordinance of baptism, nor be so ourselves, if being adult, we remain any of us unbaptized, (as he may well apprehend many among us are); nor if we decline the use of sponsors, as to what we conceive should be performed by parents for their children, and by adult persons for them-

selves: and that if we kneel not before the consecrated elements at the Lord's table, we are not to partake of his holy supper. Yea, and what if we scruple somewhat that is more than ritual, to sit under the ministry of a noted drunkard, or open enemy to godliness, as our teacher and guide, when we might enjoy the fruitful labours of one that hath not his qualifications, every Lord's day? No, by no means; without limitation, or the supposition of any possible case wherein it may be otherwise; a meeting never so little besides the established course, he will make appear is sinful and mischievous, and not tolerable upon any terms.

What then would he have us do? He directs us, indeed, afterward to the endeavour of satisfaction. But what shall we do, if after our utmost endeavours our dissatisfaction remain? What, while we are endeavouring, which may be all our days, in vain? What, if we can never be satisfied concerning the established way of baptism for ourselves and our children, and of partaking the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour, nor to hear or give countenance to such a one pretending to preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God, who either substantially perverts and depraves it, or whose profligate life proclaims him an opposer and enemy to the holy rules and design of it; nor to commit ourselves to the pastoral care and charge of a less exceptionable person; yea, though otherwise never so deserving, that hath tied his own hands, and is under such restraints that he cannot, or so disinclined that he will not, dispense the ordinances of Christ in such a way as wherein, with satisfaction to our consciences, we may enjoy them?

Read over the Doctor's sermon again and again, and you will find no course is prescribed us, but to sit still without any enjoyment of Christian ordinances at all. And with how great numbers must this be the case! For himself professes to believe that the people that frequent the separate meetings, (who you know are not a few) do generally judge it to be unlawful to join in the public assemblies. And are we always to sit still thus? That is to exchange visible Christianity for visible (at least negative) paganism? This, if you take the whole compass of it, is a thing of awful importance, that so great a limb of a Christian nation, they and their posterity, should be paganized from age to age, and cut off from the whole body of the Christian community, only because they scruple some things, the least exceptionable whereof are no part of the Christian institution, (as himself, and they whose advocate he is, will freely confess) nor do necessarily belong to it, being (as they contend) but indifferent things. He seems rather contented we should not be Christians at all, than not to be Christians of this particular mode: that we should rather want the substance of Christ's gospel and sacraments, than not have them accompanied with confessedly needless additions, and which we fear to be forbidden us by their Lord and ours.

We do sincerely profess wherein we decline the communion he invites us to; we only displease him, and those of his way and mind, out of a real fear of otherwise displeasing God. We agree with them in far greater things than we can differ in. We are of that one body which they themselves profess to be of, so far as mere Christianity is the distinction and collective bond of it, and desire to be under the conduct and government of that one Spirit. We are called with them in that

one hope of our calling, and earnestly expect (whatever hard thoughts they have of us) to meet many a one of them in the participation of the blessed, hoped end of that calling. We acknowledge that one Lord, that one faith, that one baptism, (or covenant which the baptism of our Lord's appointment seals,) and that one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all. Yet because we cannot, we dare not, consent with them to the additions which belong not (and which we fear are unduly affixed) to the religion of Christians, we are adjudged to be (as much as in them is) cut off from Christ, deprived of the dear pledges of his love and acquisitions of his blood, are driven out from the inheritance of the Lord, and it is in effect said to us, "Go and serve other gods." Thus far the severity of this reverend author towards us extends. Which, while we thus truly represent and recount, let us also,—

2. Consider what agreement it holds with what we elsewhere observe from him. We have already taken notice, that for our bare nonconformity, he acquits us of the guilt of schism. And, page 20 of this sermon, he says, he doth "not confound bare suspending communion in some particular rites, which persons do modestly scruple, and using it in what they judge to be lawful, with either total, or at least ordinary forbearance of communion in what they judge to be lawful; and proceeding to the forming of separate congregations," &c. It is this latter he severs and singles out for his opposition. Against our suspending communion in some particular rites, (which we judge unlawful) if we use it in what we judge lawful, (which I, with him, presume the lay-dissenters in England generally do,) he hath nothing to say: yea, and undertaking to show what error of conscience doth excuse a man from sin in following the dictates of it, he tells us, page 44, that, "If the error be wholly involuntary, *i.e.* if it be caused by invincible ignorance," (which he thus explains in the following words) "or after using the best means for due information of his conscience: though the act may be a fault in itself, yet it shall not be imputed to him for a sin, because it wanted the consent of the mind, by which the will is determined." And now, sir, I beseech you consider,—

(1.) When he confesses if we be willing to be satisfied, and our error be involuntary, it shall not be imputed to us for a sin, why are we so severely dealt with for what is not to be imputed to us for a sin? If it were any, methinks it should not deserve such rigour at the hands of men, that are themselves also liable to mistakes and errors. Is it so very criminal, if every poor illiterate dissenter in England, (man or woman) cannot in all their days attain to a better and more settled judgment in such dubious matters, than this reverend person had himself arrived to twenty years ago? especially that never had, or were capable of having, those peculiar helps and inducements to temper and reform their judgments that he hath enjoyed. It is a long time that his own judgment has been ripening to that maturity, as at length to think it fit and reasonable to say so much as he hath, for the reforming of ours, even in this sermon. Methinks he should not be so very quick and hard towards us, upon so slender a cause as our scrupling some particular rites, to adjudge us and ours to be totally deprived of baptism, which themselves count necessary to our salvation, and of the other ordinances of Christ, which they do not think unnecessary. And consider,—

(2.) Whereas he says, that if a man err after using the best means for due information of his conscience,—it shall not be imputed to him as a sin; what if we err this error (as he counts it) after using the best means for due information, that we ought, rather than to return to the state of paganism, to bear our part in the forming of such meetings for the worship of God, as wherein we may, with the satisfaction of our own consciences, enjoy all his holy ordinances? It will surely be within the compass of this his general position, and not be imputable as a sin. Then it is to be hoped we should rather choose to do so than paganize ourselves, or live in the wilful neglect of his institutions: which to do by our own choice, when we might do otherwise, we cannot but think a very great sin.

If here the Doctor should assume to himself to tell us not only that we err herein, (whereof we are to regard his proof, as it shall be considered by and by, more than his affirmation:) but also that our error is wilful, we shall appeal from him to one that better knows, how willingly, how gladly we should receive information, and admit the belief that we ought to content ourselves entirely and only with such provisions as the established religion, (to use the Doctor's phrase,) allows us, if the evidence of the thing itself did not seem irresistibly and unavoidably to persuade us otherwise. And for him to say so, were but to suppose men wilful, only for not being of his mind; who can as easily think him so for not being of theirs. But this cannot be a question between the Doctor and us; whom, as we have taken notice above, he hath so far obliged, as to admit, (page 37,) "that we generally judge as we practise, and that it is not to be supposed that faction among us should so commonly prevail beyond interest." But since this appears to be his determination concerning us, and that his assertion seems positive and peremptory, (page 20,) "That in this our case, to proceed to the forming of congregations under other teachers, and by other rules, than what the established religion allows, were a sinful and mischievous separation,"—we are in the next place,—

II. To discuss the matter with the Doctor; wherein we shall endeavour to show,—The indefensibleness of the judgment the Doctor hath given in this case; which will both infer, and in some part excuse, what we are afterwards to discover: *viz.*—The infirmity of what is alleged by him in this attempt of his to defend it.

1. For the former, it being obvious to common observation, that a natural self-indulgence and aptness to decline and waive what is of more terrible import to themselves, doth usually insinuate and influence men's minds in their judging of such cases; we are the more concerned, (because a favourable false judgment will do us no good) with an impartial strictness to hold ourselves to the thing itself. And when we most strictly do so, methinks the Doctor should have somewhat a hard province of it. For his determination amounts to thus much, that we ought to be kept in a state of damnation for scrupling the ceremonies, *i. e.* to be deprived of the necessary means of our salvation; and that, while he accounts our scruple, (after the use of due means for our information) not imputable to us as a sin: and not that only, but that we ought to consent to our own damnation for this no sin of ours; inasmuch as it would be sinful and mischievous to procure to ourselves the necessary means of our salvation in another way, while we appre-

hend that, without our sin, we cannot have them in the way which he allows us.

We are indeed satisfied, that our sin, one way or other, would contribute little to our salvation. But when also we are satisfied that we cannot enjoy the means of salvation in his way without sin; and he tells us, we cannot without sin enjoy them in our own: we hope every door is not shut up against us, and cannot think the merciful and holy God hath so stated our case, as to reduce us to a necessity of sinning to get out of a state of damnation. And therefore this reverend author having already determined that our remedy cannot lie, (as our consciences are hitherto informed) in coming over to him and his way; for he believes we generally judge it unlawful to join with them in the public assemblies, (page 37,) and says, (page 43,) "that no man that hath any conscience will speak against the power of it, and he that will speak against it hath no reason to be regarded in what he says:" (as no question he expected to be, otherwise he had not given himself so much trouble) and concludes, (page 44,) "that we should sin in going against it;" as he also thinks we should in acting with it, which (as is necessarily implied) we as yet see not: our great hope upon the whole matter is, that our relief must lie in taking the way which we do take; and that it cannot be proved to be sinful.

We reckon it is not; and that the Doctor's judgment herein is simply indefensible, because whatsoever is sinful must transgress some law immediately divine, or that obliges by virtue of the divine law. And we cannot find that God hath made any law, or enabled any made by others, to oblige us so far, in our present circumstances, as that we should be involved in the guilt of sin by some variation from the letter of it. For any divine law that can be supposed to oblige us to the use of the things we scruple, or else to live without the worship and ordinances of God, not knowing any such ourselves, we must wait until we be informed of it.

And that this law doth give an obliging force so far to any other, we as yet understand not. Wheresoever he hath been pleased to lodge and entrust the keys of the church, we do not find he hath appointed them to that use, to admit us into the communion of his worship and ordinances, or totally to exclude us upon such terms. And herein we suppose we have the Doctor consenting with us: who, in his *Irenicum*, (page 216,) plainly asserts, "that the office which the power of the keys implies is ministerial, and not authoritative; declarative, and not juridical:" and says, in the preface to the same book, that "he that came to take away the unsupportable yoke of the Jewish ceremonies, did never intend to gall the disciples' necks with another instead of it." Whereto he immediately adds in the same preface: "And it would be strange the church should require more than Christ himself did; and make other conditions of her communion, than our Saviour did of discipleship. What possible reason can be assigned or given why such things should not be sufficient for communion with a church, which are sufficient for eternal salvation? And certainly those things are sufficient for that, which are laid down by our Lord and Saviour in his word. What ground can there be why Christians should not stand upon the same terms now, which they did in the time of Christ and his apostles? Was not religion sufficiently guarded and fenced in then? Was there

ever more true and cordial reverence in the worship of God? What charter hath Christ given the church to bind men up to more than himself hath done, or to exclude those from her society who may be admitted into heaven? Will Christ ever thank men at the great day for keeping such out from communion with his church, whom he will vouchsafe not only crowns of glory to, but it may be *aureolæ* too, if there be any such things there? The grand commission the apostles were sent out with, was only to teach what Christ had commanded them: not the least intimation of any power given them to impose or require any thing beyond what himself had spoken to them, or they were directed to by the immediate guidance of the Spirit of God. It is not whether the things commanded and required be lawful or no; it is not whether indifferences may be determined or no; it is not how far Christians are bound to submit to a restraint of their Christian liberty, which I now inquire after; (of those things in the treatise itself;) but whether they do consult for the church's peace and unity who suspend it upon such things? how far either the example of our Saviour or his apostles doth warrant such rigorous impositions? We never read the apostles making laws but of things supposed necessary. When the council of apostles met at Jerusalem for deciding a case that disturbed the church's peace, we see they will lay no other burden, πλὴν τῶν ἐπάναγκες τούτων, 'besides these necessary things.' Acts xv. 28. It was not enough with them that the things would be necessary when they had required them, but they looked on an antecedent necessity either absolute or for the present state, which was the only ground of their imposing those commands upon the Gentile Christians. There were, after this, great diversities of practice and varieties of observations among Christians, but the Holy Ghost never thought those things fit to be made matters of laws, to which all parties should conform; all that the apostles required as to these, was mutual forbearance and condescension towards each other in them. The apostles valued not differences at all, and those things it is evident they accounted such, which whether men did them or not was not of concernment to salvation. And what reason is there why men should be so strictly tied up to such things, which they may do, or let alone, and yet be very good Christians still? Without all controversy, the main inlet of all the distractions, confusions, and divisions of the Christian world, hath been by adding other conditions of church-communion than Christ hath done."

Nor am *I* now inquiring whether the things commanded be lawful or no; nor whether indifferences may be determined or no; nor how far Christians are bound to submit to a restraint of their Christian liberty; but only inquiring (as he there doth) concerning the charter given by Christ for the binding men up more than himself hath done. And I further inquire, by what power they can be bound which Christ hath not given? And if there be no such power to bind them, suppose the things required were all lawful, (which if it can be evinced, I should rejoice to see done,) yet while they cannot in conscience think they are, how can they apprehend themselves bound to be without the means of salvation which Christ's charter entitles them to? I readily grant it is fit a man do many things for peace and common order's sake which, otherwise, no law doth formally oblige him to, *i. e.* supposing he can do those things without intolerable prejudice to himself. And so it is

commonly determined in the matter of scandals. But can it be thought a man is to put himself out of the state or way of salvation in compliment to such as will otherwise take offence; and be so courteous as to perish for ever, rather than they shall be displeased?

Yea, and it may be moreover added, that our course being accounted lawful, must also (as the Doctor speaks in another case) be thought a duty: for the things that are as means necessary to our salvation, are also necessary by divine precept. We are commanded to hear God's word; to devote ourselves and our children to God in baptism; and, at the Lord's own table, to remember him, and "show forth his death until he come." And if we compare together certain positions of this reverend author, we cannot see but he must, as our case is, acknowledge our obligation to the practice which he here seems to blame. For in his *Irenicum*, (page 109) he asserts, that every Christian is under an obligation to join in church society with others; because it is his duty to profess himself a Christian, and to own his religion publicly, and to partake of the ordinances and sacraments of the gospel, which cannot be without society with some church or other. And he after adds, on the same page, "It had been a cause disputed of by some, (particularly by Grotius, the supposed author of a little tract, *An semper sit communicandum per symbola?* when he designed the syncretism with the church of Rome) whether in a time when churches are divided, it be a Christian's duty to communicate with any of those parties which divide the church, and not rather to suspend communion from all of them." A case not hard to be decided; for either the person questioning it doth suppose the churches divided to remain true churches, but some to be more pure than other; in which case, by virtue of his general obligation to communion, he is bound to adhere to that church which appears most to retain its evangelical purity. To which purpose he further tells us, (page 110.) "he knows not whether Chrysostom's act were to be commended, who after being made a deacon in the church of Antioch by Meletius, upon his death, because Flavianus came in irregularly as bishop of the church, would neither communicate with him, nor with Paulinus another bishop at that time in the city, nor with the Meletians, but for three years' time withdrew himself from communion with any of them." And, (page 113,) "Where any church is guilty of corruptions both in doctrine and practice, which it avoweth and professeth, and requireth the owning them as necessary conditions of communion with her, there a non-communion with that church is necessary, and a total and positive separation is lawful and convenient." What he discourses, (p. 111, 112,) upon the question, "Whether it is a sin to communicate with churches true as to essentials, but supposed corrupt in the exercise of discipline?" many of us will, no doubt, heartily concur with him in. But it touches not the case of many more, who do not so much fear upon the account of the neglect of discipline to be involved in the guilt of other men's sin; (as there seems to be little cause, that part being not incumbent upon us:) nor, if that be his meaning, when he speaks of separating on a pretence of great purity, is it the case with most of us: but we justly fear (and therefore avoid) to be made to sin ourselves, by having such things as we judge to be sinful imposed on us, as the conditions of our communion. And as to this case, this reverend author speaks our sense in this last cited proposition, and pleads our present

cause. Nor need we more to be said on behalf of it than what is reducible to that general proposition; or particularly to that second thing, compared with the third, which (page 115,) he says "makes separation and withdrawment of communion lawful and necessary; *viz.* corruption of practice," where we say, as he doth, "we speak not of practice as relating to the civil conversation of men, but as it takes in the *agenda* of religion; when unlawful things of that kind, are not only crept into a church, but are the prescribed devotion of it: those being required, (which he adds as an accession to the foregoing) as necessary conditions of communion from all the members of their church, which makes our withdrawing from them unavoidably necessary, as long as we judge them to be such corruptions as indeed they are." And whereas he instances only in such things as belong to the head of idolatrous customs, (suppressing what might be instanced under the other head, which he also there mentions; *viz.* superstitious practice) yet we doubt not, if other things also that appear to be sinful, besides idolatrous customs, be required as necessary conditions of communion, the case will be the same; unless we will distinguish sins into such as be lawful and such as be unlawful; or there be any that may be committed, that we may be admitted to the communion of this or that church.

Now, to reduce things to the method which suits the present case: if this reverend author do still judge,—that where sinful conditions of communion are imposed, there non-communion is necessary, (and those things be sinful to us which our consciences judge to be so,) as he hath acknowledged:—and again, if he still judge,—that we are under an obligation to join in church society, so as to own our religion publicly, and to partake of the ordinances and sacraments of the gospel;—he must certainly account that our duty which he taxes in this sermon as our fault, at least till our consciences be otherwise informed, whereof many of us have no great hope.

We are indeed not so stupid, as not to apprehend there are laws the letter whereof seems adverse to us. Nor are we so ungrateful, as not to acknowledge his majesty's clemency in not subjecting us to the utmost rigour of those laws; whom we cannot, without deep regret, so much as seem not, in every thing, exactly to obey. Nor can it enter into our minds to imagine, that he expects to be obeyed by us at the expense of our salvation; or that it would be at all grateful to him, that being, as we are, unsatisfied in some things that are by the law made necessary to our partaking the privileges of the Christian church, we should become pagans in duty to him. His majesty was once pleased to give an ample testimony, by his never-to-be-forgotten gracious declaration of March 15, 1672, how remote any such thought was from his royal breast; and though we humbly submit to the exigency of those reasons of state from whence it proceeded, that we enjoy not the continued positive favour which his majesty was then pleased to express towards us; yet we have no reason to doubt, but his propensions are equally benign as they were.

Nor, though it be uncertain to us what laws they are, the authority whereof this reverend person relies upon to make our practice sinful, yet we hope he doth not mean to urge us herein with the laws of the civil government, because those as much forbid our non-communion, (and under as severe penalty,) for which he acquits us from the guilt

of schism; or, if we endeavour satisfaction, from any sin imputable to us.

But if that should be his meaning, we desire it may be considered how unreasonable it seems, that the design of the law relating to that part of our practice which the doctor in this sermon condemns, being declaredly to prevent sedition, they should take themselves to be meant who are conscious of no such design or disposition :—and again, that it is not with any reason, charity, or justice, to be supposed, that when that, and other restrictive laws were made, either the temporal ruin of so great a part of the nation, as are now found to be dissenters, was intended by the legislators, or the reducing them to the condition of heathens. But a uniformity in the worship of God, being in itself a thing really desirable, this means was thought fit to be tried, in order to that end. And so are human laws, about such mutable matters, generally designed to be probationary; the events and success being unforeknown. Whereupon, after a competent time of trial, as his majesty was graciously pleased to declare his own favourable sense and intention, so it is very commonly known, that the like propensions were by common suffrage expressed in parliament, *viz.* to grant a relaxation. So that the law, being in its own nature nothing else but an indication of the legislator's will, we may account the thing was in substance done, so far as may satisfy a man's private reason and conscience concerning the lawgiver's intention and pleasure; though it were not done with that formality as uses (and is generally needful) to be stood upon, by them who are the ministers of the law. And that it was not done with that formality also, seemed rather to be from a disagreement about the manner or method of doing it, than about the thing to be done. And how usual is it for laws, without formal repeal, gently and gradually to expire, grow old, and vanish away, not being longer useful, as the ritual part of the Mosaical law did become an ineffectual and unprofitable thing! And how easy were it to instance in many other laws, the letter of which they, that urge these against the dissenters, do without scruple transgress; and from which no such weighty reasons do urge to borrow now and then a point! How many dispense with themselves in many parts of their required conformity, that have obliged themselves to it? The priests in the temple transgress the law, and are blameless. Yea, and He that knows all things, and who is Judge of all, knows how little scruple is made of transgressing the laws by gross immoralities and debaucheries. Men learn to judge of the sacredness of laws by their own inclinations. Any that can be wire-drawn, and made, by torture, to speak against religion not modified their way, must be most binding: such as prohibit the vilest and most open wickedness, bind as the withs did Samson.

The sum of all is, that whereas we are under the obligation of the divine law to worship God in the use of those his ordinances which require to be dispensed and attended in society, and that we apprehend we cannot do it without sin in the way this reverend author invites us to: whereas also we do, with this author, deliberate, whether Christ hath given any power to men to oblige us to the things we scruple, or disoblige us from the things we practise, and judge it unproved: we cannot but reckon the judgment the Doctor hath given in our case (that our practice is sinful) is erroneous, and indefensible by any man, but

least fitly, of most other men, attempted to be defended by himself; from whom it would little have been expected that he should so earnestly recommend that very thing to us, as the only foundation of union, which he had so publicly told us in his preface to the *Irenicum*, "was, without controversy, the main inlet of all the distractions, confusions, and divisions of the Christian world, *viz.* the adding other conditions of church communion than Christ hath done."

And though he hath lately told the world, there are some passages in that book that show only the inconsiderateness of youth, and that he seems to wish unsaid, yet he hath not, that we know, declared that these are some of them. However, since this present determination and judgment of his against us is so peremptory and positive, as well as severe, let us, in the next place,—

2. Consider, and carefully examine, as we are concerned, what he hath performed in defence of it; and, it is hoped, the inefficacy and weakness of his attempt therein will sufficiently appear. What I can find in his sermon hath any aspect or design that way, is either *ad rem*, or, *ad hominem*. And, to my apprehension, his reasonings, of the one kind or the other, are altogether unconcluding.

(1.) As to what may be supposed to be *ad rem*, if you look narrowly, you will find that the principal things alleged by him that can, under that notion, give support to his cause, are only affirmed, but not proved. For instance, (page 9,) when he tells us, that the "apostle supposed the necessity of one fixed and certain rule," &c.; this had been very material to his purpose; if, first, he had told us, and had proved, the apostle meant some rule or other superadded to the sacred Scriptures: for then he might, it is to be presumed, as easily have let us know what that rule was, which, most probably, would have ended all our controversy; it being little to be doubted, we should all most readily have agreed to obey it: or, secondly, if he had proved, that, because the apostle had power to make such a rule, and oblige the churches to observe it, that therefore such church-guides as they whose cause the Doctor pleads, have an equal power to make other rules diverse from his, containing many new things which he never enjoined, and to enforce them upon the church; (though manifestly tending to its destruction, rather than edification;) but these things he doth but suppose himself, without colour of proof.

Again, for his notion of churches, (page 16—19,) examine as strictly as you will what he says about it, and see whether it come to any thing more than only to represent a national church a possible thing; and whereto the name church may without absurdity be given. His own words seem to aim no higher. "Why may there not be one national church from the consent in the same articles of religion, and the same order of worship?" page 18. "The word was used in the first ages of the Christian church, as it comprehended the ecclesiastical governors, and the people of whole cities. And why many of these cities being united together under one civil government and the same rules of religion, should not be called one national church, I cannot understand." page 19.

But can it now be inferred thence, that therefore God hath actually constituted every Christian kingdom or nation such a church? Can it further be inferred, that he hath invested the guides of this church, not

chosen by the people (according to Scripture, and primitive practice for some ages,) with a power to make laws and decrees, prescribing not only things necessary for common order and decency, but new federal rites, and teaching signs and symbols, superadded to the whole Christian institution; with many more dubious and unnecessary things besides: and to exclude sober and pious Christians from the privileges that are proper to the Christian church, as such, merely for that out of conscience towards God, they dare not admit into their worship those additions to the Christian religion; to take order they shall have no pastors, no sacraments, no assemblies for worship; and because they will not be so much more than Christians, that they shall not be Christians at all?

He that would go about to make these inferences merely from the forementioned ground, would gain to be laughed at by all sober men, instead of a conclusion, whatsoever better success he should have who should undertake to prove the same things any other way.

This reverend author was so wise as not to attempt either of these. But then in the mean time, what doth the mere possible notion of such a church advantage his cause? Because it is possible, there might have been such a Macedonian, or such a Lydian church, is such a one therefore necessary, and any other constitution of a Christian church impossible or unlawful? Or because the general meeting of magistrates of the whole city and people together in pagan Athens was called Ἐκκλησία, therefore such must be the constitution of a Christian church? And therefore such a church hath such powers from Christ as were abovementioned?

Here, howsoever, we make our stand, and say that until the Doctor hath proved these two things,—

First, That such a church as he hath given us the notion of, as of a thing merely possible, is actually a divine institution: and—

Secondly, That God hath given to the ecclesiastical governors in it, never chosen by the Christian community, or to any other, power to superadd institutions of the nature abovementioned, and to enforce them under the mentioned penalties: all his reasonings that pretend to be *ad rem*, are to no purpose, and do nothing at all advantage his cause.

Yet there are some passages in this part of his discourse, that though they signify nothing to his main purpose are yet very remarkable, and which it is fit we should take some notice of.

As when (page 16) he tells us what he means by whole churches; *viz.* "The churches of such nations which, upon the decay of the Roman empire, resumed their just power of government to themselves; and upon their owning Christianity, incorporated into one Christian society, under the same common ties and rules of order and government." As if there could be no whole churches in the world that had not been of the Roman empire, or as if those of the Roman empire could not have been whole churches without resumption of the civil government; as we suppose he means: or, as if (which he intimates, page 19,) we needed this (so dearly espoused notion) as a ground to acquit us from the imputation of schism, in our separating from the church of Rome. Which certainly it were not for the advantage of the protestant cause to admit; for then all that remain within the empire, were bound to con-

tinue in the communion of the Roman church. And in the other kingdoms, where princes have not resumed their just right of reforming errors in doctrine and corruptions in worship, all should be schismatics that should separate from the church of Rome.

Again, when (page 17) he would confute that great mistake, the making the notion of a church barely to relate to acts of worship: (a mistake whereof I never knew any man guilty,) he surely runs into as great an opposite mistake, in making the notion of a church to be no more than of a society of men united together, for their order and government, according to the rules of the Christian religion. Now faith and worship are quite excluded the notion of a church; and order and government, and the rules of the Christian religion, but as they refer to these, only included. Whence it will come to pass that we can have no notion of one catholic church; from which yet he argues at the bottom of the same page.

Nor, though I dislike the thing, do I understand the strength of the Doctor's argument, against making the notion of the church barely to relate to acts of worship; *viz.* That if this held true, the church must be dissolved as soon as the congregation is broken up. For will it not also follow as well, that if the notion of a church relate only to order and government, every time any meeting for affairs of order and government is broken up, the church is dissolved? And that an assembly of the states in any kingdom or nation cannot break up without a dissolution of the government? A parliament (at least) not adjourn or be prorogued without being dissolved? And whereas, he adds, "but if they retain the nature of a church when they do not meet together for worship, then there is some other bond that unites them, and whatever that is, it constitutes the church:" is it not possible there may be such a bond for worship, as well as for government? an obligation to meet at stated times for that purpose, when they are not met? And then (if this were all that were to be said to the contrary) why might not that bond as well serve to constitute the church? But—

(2.) For his reasonings *ad hominem*, they need not detain us long; he argues from the judgment of the Assembly of Divines, and others. All which arguing must suppose, if it concern us, that we are bound to be of the same judgment with the ministers that are and have been so and so minded, which I for my part understand not. But I perceive here his intention is, having endeavoured to draw us off from our ministers, now to move another stone, and try if he can draw them off from us.

For the Assembly, I think it fit those that survive of them should be as much concluded by what they then determined, as this reverend author by the *Irenicum*. But I know no reason that such as they never represented, nor who ever pretended to be of their party, should be concluded to the world's end; nor do understand why even the same party may not be as well supposed in a possibility to vary from itself in forty years, as the same man from himself in less than twenty. If they did incline to deal too hardly with their brethren, that will not justify them who deal more hardly. It is hoped such as have been so inclined, have, being smitten, and suffered the rebukes of the Almighty, repented it, and are become wiser: and when some think themselves grown wiser by prosperity, others by adversity, there is less reason to suspect the latter.

Yet also this reverend author ought to have considered the great disparity of the cases he would parallel. For when one sort of men are considering of having only such a frame of things settled, as are imposed by Christ himself, whether they judge rightly or no that he hath imposed every part of that frame, yet while they think and judge that he hath, and consequently that nothing is to be abated of it: it were very unfitly argued, that therefore another sort professing to impose many things never imposed by Christ, should abate nothing of their unnecessary impositions.

For such as the Doctor quotes besides of the nonconformists, acknowledging the parish churches true churches, and the lawfulness of holding, sometimes, communion with some of them; it is not to be thought but among so many parties as come all under one common notion of dissenters from the public rule, (and whom that rule did not find one, but made them so in that common notion) there must be great diversity of opinions, and proportionably differing practices in these matters. I heartily prefer the most moderate, as I believe you do. But here this reverend author takes occasion for so ignominious reflections upon our preachers, as insincere, dishonest, and unconscientious, as I doubt not, in one twenty years more, his ingenuity will oblige him to repent more heartily than ever it permitted him to do of his *Irenicum*. Because he can allege a very few persons that have spoken to this purpose, therefore, first it must be represented to the world as their common judgment; next, they are charged with concealing this judgment; ("why is this kept up as such a mighty secret in the breasts of their teachers?" page 37,) and then it is endeavoured to make men think they practise against their own judgments, in preaching to separate congregations.

Surely you and I are concerned, as we have occasion, to say what we truly can, for the just vindication of our ministers. I doubt not but you believe, and you have, for some, particular reason to be confident that it is for our sakes they expose themselves to the displeasure of such men as Dr. Stillingfleet. I must, for my part, say,—

[1.] That I believe it to be the judgment of very few, that every parish is, as such, a true Christian church. I am sorry I have such a ground to fear it of one kind, *viz.* that some may not be so, as not having among them any tolerable understanding of the most confessedly fundamental principles of Christian religion. What say you to such, where the minister is grossly ignorant of the principles of religion, or habitually vicious, and of a profligate life? Do mere orders make him a minister, who (perhaps since he received them) is become destitute of the most essential qualifications; any more than the habit, a monk; or a beard, a philosopher? Can a Mercury be made of every log? Not to insist that this reverend author can scarce think they are, from a ground of another kind, because they assemble only for worship and not for government.

[2.] And surely, a church may be unfit to be communicated with, although it be a true church; (those words of the reverend and worthy dean of Canterbury carry their own light with them to this purpose*) as a man may be truly and really a man, though he have the plague upon

* Sermon on Josh. xxiv. 15.

him, and for that reason be fit to be avoided by all that wish well to themselves. It is true, there are vastly different degrees of that unfitness. But I see not how they can apprehend there is the fitness which is simply necessary, who judge there are conditions of communion imposed that are sinful.

And I believe this reverend author will think it possible a true church may impose some sinful conditions of her communion; in which case, he hath determined a non-communion with her necessary and unavoidable.

[3.] For those that are of that judgment, the parochial assemblies ought to be communicated with so far as is alleged was declared. As I know none of the dissenting ministers that thought they ought always and only to be communicated with, so I see not with what pretence it can be said they keep up their judgment herein as a mighty secret. If it be so, how came this author to have it revealed to him? Is printing it to the world keeping it secret? Some have published it in that way, as we see is known to the Doctor. Others, by their frequent discourses, and their own practice. And, to my observation, divers of them have in their sermons made it much their business to dispose the minds of their hearers to a truly catholic Christian union, as I have been much pleased to take notice some of the conforming clergy do also. But if this be the Doctor's quarrel with any of our ministers, (who think such communion lawful) that they do not constantly, in every sermon, inculcate the business of communicating in the ceremonial way; for my part, I shall blame them as much as he, when once he hath made it very evident that the ceremonies are more profitable, and likely to do more good to the souls of men, than repentance, the faith of the gospel, the fear of God, good life in this world, and eternal life in the other; which I confess are the more usual subjects, so far as I have had the opportunity to observe, of their preaching.

And, let me add, that I can tell you of a secret, which some might be apt to think (as it is really so) is industriously and much more unrighteously kept up in one man's breast, that may be conscious of a great design in it. The author of the book entitled, "The Weapon Salve, or Irenicum," seems to have found it some inconveniency to him, to have been the author of so good a book; whereupon, in a certain soliloquy, (though he is pleased to represent it as a tripartite dialogue) he asks himself his own opinion of it, and gives himself this answer; "I will tell you freely, (as you know men use great liberty in talking with themselves, though prudence would direct that to be done in some cases with great caution, and not to talk inconvenient things too loud, lest they be too much overheard) I believe there are many things in it, which, if Dr. Stillingfleet were to write now, he would not have said, for there are some things which show his youth and want of due consideration; others, in which he yielded too far," &c. Now here (though I believe he had begun to be inclined to throw away his salve, and use only the weapon for the wounding of sound parts, not the cutting off the incurable, yet) I conceive one may safely enough take it for granted, his intention was not to retract the whole book. But whereas he tells us not what he doth; how would the Doctor take it if one should ask, Why is this kept up as such a mighty secret in his own breast? Or say the tenderness of his mind might, it is likely, out of mere shame-

facedness, keep him from declaring against what his own conscience tells him is truth? However, this retractation cannot make that which was true become false. The reason of things is sullen, and will not alter to serve men's conveniences. Perhaps, indeed, his judgment is really altered. If, therefore, he would acquit himself like an honest and conscientious man, let him tell the world plainly, which be the pernicious principles of that book; that honest and conscientious men, who have thought well of many things in it, (and perhaps the same things which he now disapproves) may not always be deceived by the shows of reason that deceived himself, and by which he deceived them. The same justice that obliges not to lay a stumbling-block in the way of the blind, doth also oblige him to remove it who hath laid it: which is to be done, not by professing another opinion, for we depend not on his authority, which he hath himself so much diminished, but on the reasons he alleged; which, if they were fallacious, let him show wherein, and answer his own reasons. To say the truth, the gravity and seriousness wherewith that book was written, appears to have so little of the youth in it, in comparison of the jocularity and sportful humour of some of his latter writings, when he hath been discussing the most weighty and important cases of conscience, that it seems as a prodigy in nature, and that he began his life at the wrong end; that he was old in his youth, and reserved his puerility to his more grown age. But we hope there is a great residue behind, wherein he may have opportunity and inclination to show the world that he did not repent the pious design of that book: or, at least, with a repentance that (can as well as that) ought to be repented of.

[4.] And whereas such of the dissenting ministers as have most openly declared for communicating at some times with some of the parochial churches, have also declared their judgment of the lawfulness and necessity of preaching and hearing, and doing other religious duties in other congregations also; if now either the Doctor discern not the consistency of these things, or they discern not their inconsistency; is there nothing to be said or thought, but that they acquit not themselves like honest and conscientious men? Must it be taken for a demonstration of a man's want of honesty and conscience, not to be presently of the Doctor's opinion in every thing? or not to see every consequence which he sees, or thinks he sees?

But let us consider the goodness of this consequence, which it must be so great a piece of dishonesty not to discern: if it be the duty of some to communicate sometimes with some parish churches, (for this is the most the Doctor could make of that relator's concession, whom he cites, page 21, 22, of his sermon) therefore it is the duty of every one to communicate with any parish church where his abode is, so constantly and entirely as never to have any communion with any otherwise constituted congregation.

This is the thing must be to his purpose inferred; yea, and he would have it be from somewhat a lower premise. For he tells us, (page 37,) "that he dare say, if most of the preachers at this day in the separate meetings were soberly asked their judgment, whether it were lawful (only) for the people to join with us in the public assemblies, they would not deny it." He surely dares not say that their meaning was, that it was lawful constantly to join with them in all their parochial assemblies,

unless he dares say, what he hath not, from any of them, the least ground to think. Now hereupon he collects, (page 38,) that our ministers cannot declare so much in a separate congregation, but this truth must fly in their faces: because he supposeth it repugnant to it, to preach at all in a separate congregation, and yet afterwards on the same page he so well agrees with himself, as to bid them, if they would acquit themselves like honest and conscientious men, tell the people plainly that they look on our churches as true churches, and that they may lawfully communicate with us in prayers and sacraments. And where are they to tell them so, but in the separate congregations? Singly and severally he knows it were impossible. Nor do I think he would reckon honesty and conscience obliged them to come and tell the people so in their congregations.

Now I am afraid there are but a very few honest and conscientious men in the world at this day, if none are to go for such but who can perceive the strength and reasonableness of the above-mentioned consequence.

And that you may further see what reasons our ministers may have, notwithstanding all the alleged concessions, to administer in the worship of God in our assemblies, though it were never so much their common universal judgment, that they and we might sometimes communicate in some of the parochial; let us consider, that in the more populous and frequented places, as with you at London for instance, the churches cannot receive, some not a tenth part, some not half the people belonging to them, few can receive all. Methinks good men should not be offended that multitudes do in this distress relieve themselves by resorting to other places for necessary instruction. And though they be the inclinations of the people that divide them this way and that, (as it can be nothing else) though places for their resort be not every where most conveniently situate for their resort, where there is most need, (which must be taken not always where it were most desirable, but where they can be had) yet they that have a mind, had better go to places at a more inconvenient distance, than have no whither to go; and it is better the necessities of many should be provided for in such an exigency, than of none. In the mean time, the churches of worthy conforming ministers in such populous places are generally filled, as I have been informed, and have sometimes had occasion to observe.

Do not necessities of a much lower nature oblige us to recede from stated human rules? It is well known there is a law against relieving such as beg out of their own parishes. But if one find upon the road such a poor wretch ready to perish, am I not bound, notwithstanding, if I can, to relieve him? And who would think in such a case, I transgressed the true intention of the law?

Yea, and God's own laws respecting rituals, common order, and the external part of religion, were by his own direction to yield to far less urgent necessities, to the plucking an ass or an ox out of a ditch, how much more the souls of men? "Have we not read what David did when he was an hungered, and they that were with him, how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew-bread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?" How expressly is it alleged by our blessed Saviour, against those nice and punctilious observers and urgers of the letter of

the law, the pharisees, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." And if he were willing to abate a sacrifice to himself, that there might be room for the exercise of mercy towards men's bodies, how monitory and apprehensive should that be to such merciless persons, as would have the very souls of men themselves be sacrificed to their stiff and unyielding humours! Positive laws cease to bind when, by accident, they thwart the law of nature: which binds to nothing more deeply than the endeavour of saving one's own soul, and (within the bounds of his calling) his neighbour's as his own.

What if many of our ministers think it lawful, and at some times, a duty to join in some of the public assemblies? It is not then their duty, when an inviting opportunity, and so urging necessities lay before them greater duty. This reverend author tells us, very pertinently to this purpose, when he was declaiming against us and our ministers, (page 31,) of his sermon: "It is a great fault among some who pretend to great niceness in some positive duties, that they have little regard to some comparative duties; for that which may be a duty in one case, when it comes to thwart a greater duty, may be none. This doctrine we learn from our blessed Saviour in the case of the obligation of the sabbath; which he makes to yield to duties of mercy." And can we think that a duty lying upon us, which, in our circumstances, makes a far greater duty impracticable? We acknowledge order and unity very lovely and desirable things, but we think it of greater importance, that the ministers with whom such fault is found, conduct men, though not in so accurate order, (which they cannot help) to heaven, than let them go in the best order, yea, (and as the case is) without any at all, to hell.

And what though the necessity of many of us arise from our own scruples; and what though those scruples were without ground; doth it therefore follow we must be abandoned to perish, when our very error, if we be willing to admit conviction, (as we sincerely are, could the matter admit it) is not imputable to us for a sin? This author was once pleased to make it one of his proposals for accommodation, (page 64 of his *Irenicum*;) "That no sanctions be made, nor mulct or penalties be inflicted on such who only dissent from the use of some things, whose lawfulness they at present scruple, until sufficient time and means be used for the information of the nature and indifferency of the things, that it may be seen whether it be out of wilful contempt, and obstinacy of spirit, or only weakness of conscience, and dissatisfaction concerning the things themselves that they disobey. And if it be made evident to be out of contempt, that only such penalties be inflicted as answer to the nature of the offence." Where he adds, "I am sure it is contrary to the primitive practice, and the moderation then used, to suspend and deprive men of their ministerial function for not conforming in habits, gestures, or the like." Which he makes good by following instances beyond his own present contradictions. It is strange that for such like things, now, it is thought so highly just that our ministers are totally to be kept out of the ministry, and we out of the church, and way of salvation! Are these unproportionable penalties even where contempt appears? And what are they when, through God's mercy, there appears not the least colour of it?

Is mere scrupling a human device in the worship of God, and an inability to see with other men's eyes, and to mould and form our

judgment and consciences as some other men can do theirs, a crime so inexpiable, that nothing less than our eternal ruin can satisfy for it? They know, who have read the Turkish history, that mere scruple brought that necessity upon the garrison of Sfetigrade in Scanderbeg's days, that rather than drink of water which they thought polluted, they must either surrender or perish. If another possible way could have been found to supply them, was it fit they and the town should rather be lost, than their unreasonable scruple be borne with? Or should they, in that exigency, be still held to it, to drink of that very water or none? We think we have greater reason to urge for our scruples, we think our necessity is greater, the case more important; and God deliver us from such pastors as will not think so too, and value souls at a higher rate.

Our case being thus, we apply ourselves to ministers, bound by their calling and office to attend the affairs of the souls of men; they are at leisure, have nothing else to do; they may not live idle and useless in the world. This is their proper business. Whatever their opinion is about the things we scruple, (and we believe it is mostly the same with ours) we see not how they can, or dare, deny us the help of their ministerial labours: we thank God that they dare not. And should they daily spend their pains upon us to urge us to the ceremonial way, as we believe they would do it very heartlessly, (wishing things to be in that respect otherwise in the Christian church, as well as we) so would their labour in that kind be unprofitable, and therefore ungrateful to us. Nor do we think it needs any sort of mortifiedness in them (as we find they are jeered under that notion) not to send us away unedified and grieved from their congregations: so much as a mortifiedness in their love of souls, and their sense of eternal concernments; wherein too many others have attained to a great degree of mortification.

But now, my honoured friend, what think you of our cause? Let us seriously consider it, not according to the appearance which it will have to a captious, sophistical wit; but as you will apprehend it to look in the eyes of our supreme and final Judge; considering also the same blessed Jesus, as that mighty Redeemer and lover of souls, "who once suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring them to God." Bring the matter before him with whom you are to expect no tricks, but most plain and equal dealing. And bethink yourself, whether of these two things he will be more likely to have regard unto, the saving of souls which he bought with his blood; or, the preserving inviolate certain human institutions and rules, confessed by the devisers of them not to be necessary to the being of the church, which common reason sees unnecessary to its well-being, to its external order and decency, (evidently as great without them) which this author makes foreign thereto, when he tells us that matters of order and decency are allowable and fitting; but ceremonies, properly taken for actions significative, and therefore appointed because significative, their lawfulness may with better ground be scrupled, (*Iren.* page 68,) and which experience shows to be destructive; as whereby so great numbers, not only of his labourers are to be discarded, but of living, flourishing plants to be torn up by the roots, and all thrown out of his vineyard together?

For my own part, I must profess not to have the least doubt concerning the thing itself which we and our ministers do and practise; it

is only our common great concern to be very careful with what temper of spirit, and with what design we do it. It should to the uttermost be endeavoured to be done with all meekness and humility, with all possible reverence to authority, abhorrence of the least real contempt, and unfeigned regret there should be any appearance of it, though never so unavoidable; with a design only to glorify God, and promote the common salvation: not to make or serve a party, or advance any other interest than that of mere substantial Christianity and godliness. Let us covet this temper of mind, and where we see persons of real worth, and of a true latitude and largeness of spirit commensurate to the Christian interest, that fall in with the public constitution, value and love them nothing the less than if their judgments about these lesser things were never so exactly squared with our own; and so much more, by how much they may excel us in far greater and more valuable things. And if it be our lot to suffer under the notion of evil-doers for doing what we take to be our duty, let it be according to the Doctor's wholesome counsel, with an unrepining patience, and with much thankfulness both to God and our rulers that we have enjoyed so much tranquillity; and with that cheerfulness that becomes those that expect a blessed eternity, and to be translated ere long into a pure and peaceful region, where we are to serve God in society even with many of them who have been offended with us, without scruple or trouble to ourselves or them. If with such dispositions and aims we persist in our course, while our case is attended with such circumstances as now it is; I have no fear, I sincerely profess to you, of our acceptance with God, and, sooner or later, with all good men.

Upon the whole matter, I conceive the honest cause you were so deeply concerned for, is really unharmed, and I hope you apprehend it too; and that therefore your fear and despondency was causeless, as if it could not outlive this attempt against it by Doctor Stillingfleet. As you therefore see how capable it is of defence against him, I shall not forget the other part of my undertaking: but shall,—

Secondly, Say somewhat (as yours sufficiently lets me see there is cause) in his just defence against you. And really, Sir, though that be an untoward thing to dispute against, I find it needful to defend him only against your anger, *i. e.* the excess of it: which, although it can no more harm him, than he hath done the cause; and consequently the blunting and breaking its edge (which is the thing I aim at) cannot advantage him, yet it will do him right; and (which was the thing I first intended) it will be an advantage and kindness to you.

I must here, indeed, tell you, that I cannot blame you for being in some measure offended, as I can excuse the Doctor but in part. I do dislike, as well as you, two things especially in his way of managing this business; *viz.* his too great acrimony, and too little seriousness.

For the former, it is too evident; and I heartily pity him for it, that he should so forget, and suffer himself to be transported beyond the rules of Christianity and prudence; neither of which would allow him, (and I am sure within the compass of the former, his text would not) so to make himself a standard to all other men, as to suppose no man can be honest or conscientious that is not of his mind in the matters he then undertook to controvert; or that should not judge of the connections of things as he did. I cannot think it hath added to his repu-

tation to reflect so grossly before such an assembly, upon a whole party of men that are, many of them, well known in the world; and who, in point of integrity, are so little liable to be suspected, that an attempt to blemish them upon so slight a pretence, and in matter of fact, so untrue, could not but recoil upon himself; especially with them that shall impartially compare their inducements to prevaricate with what he hath.

And for the other, it were indeed to have been wished, that upon so grave and solemn an occasion he had foreborne jests, especially of that nature; as, for instance, "such mortified and conscientious men, and the most godly—can least endure to be told of their faults," &c. Which expressions any one that considers his scope, will understand to be ironical; and that considers the matter, to be somewhat bold ironies; and the occasion to be causeless ones. Inasmuch as it is not impossible, that truly mortified and conscientious men may desire opportunities to do God service in the world, in a way that he dislikes. And it may consist with real godliness not to count all those things faults which he takes to be such. And indeed, in his dedication, his way of averting the report of those ill men, that he intended to stir up the magistrates and judges to a persecution of the dissenters is, to any considering man, sportful and ludicrous; *viz.* offering them only such a way of escaping persecution, as whereupon a man may shun suffering, if he please, from any party of men in the world, as such, by being in every thing of their mind and way; but which in effect grants the charge which he would avoid, that if we will not be so united to his party, we were to expect nothing but utmost rigour. One would rather have thought he should have bedewed that discourse with tears, which had in itself, most manifestly, so awful and tremendous a design, as not only the devoting of so great numbers, that might possibly not be convinced and persuaded by him to a temporal ruin; but the depriving them of the ordinary means of their salvation: and that if he thought it necessary for the preserving of order in the church, they should be so dealt with; he should have spoken of their case with the greatest compassion and tenderness, not with derision and contempt.

Yet I would have you use lenitives with yourself, and calm your own spirit; and I wish you were capable of contributing any thing to the moderating and pacifying his too; that though he have been angry unprovoked, and with a sort of men that have ever respected and honoured him, as if he had been of themselves; his anger that hath been without cause, (as you know, perhaps, who in a like expression blames the exorbitancy of another passion) may not also be without end. At least, I pray you take heed you do not deserve the like sharp repartee, which the cynic met with from that noble philosopher, that he taxed his pride with greater pride; that you exceed not the heats whereof you complain. If he will still retain his fervour, let him be angry alone: and his displeasure have its continuance with as little influence or concomitancy of yours, (and I could wish of any other man's) as (for aught I know) it had its beginning: and that since he thinks of being a sacrifice, he may only burn gently in his own flame, which he may moderate as he please, and I hope will seasonably extinguish, before he hath suffered much harm by it.

For the qualifying of your own too great resentment and offence; I would have you consider how great reason you have to believe, that

this blow came only from the (somewhat misgoverned) hand of a pious and good man. Be it far from you to imagine otherwise. If you think he was to blame for intimating suspicions of their sincerity whom he opposes, make not yourself equally blameable, by admitting hereupon any concerning his: which would argue a mean, narrow spirit, and a most unwarrantable fondness of a party, as if all true religion and godliness were bound up in it.

And if it look unlovely in your eyes to see one of so much avowed latitude and enlargedness of mind, and capable upon that account of being the more universally serviceable to the Christian church, forsaking that comprehensive interest, so far as to be ingulphed into a party upon a private and distinct basis, consider what aspect the same thing would have in yourself. And never make his difference with you in this matter a reason to yourself of a hard judgment concerning him; who can, you must consider, differ no more from us, than we do from him.

Believe him, in the substance of what he said, to speak according to his present judgment. Think how gradually and insensibly men's judgments alter, and are formed by their converse: that his circumstances have made it necessary to him to converse most, for a long time, with those who are fully of that mind which he here discovers; that his own real worth must have drawn into his acquaintance the best and most valuable of them, and such for whom he might not only have a kindness, but a reverence; and who, therefore, must have the more power and influence upon him, to conform his sentiments to their own.

We ourselves do not know, had we been, by our circumstances, led to associate and converse mostly with men of another judgment, what our own would have been. And they that are wont to discover most confidence of themselves, do usually but discover most ignorance of the nature of man; and how little they consider the power of external objects and inducements to draw men's minds this way or that. Nor, indeed, as to matters of this nature, can any man be confident that the grace of God shall certainly incline him to be of this or another opinion or practice in these matters; because we find those that we have reason to believe have great assistances of divine grace are divided about them, and go not all one way.

We may, indeed, be confident that had the same considerations occurred to us which have, we should have been of the same mind and judgment that we are. But it is very supposable, that some accidental occasions might possibly have happened, that might hinder our actual taking up such considerations, though the things to be considered were not unknown to us; and not that only, but that might prevent our knowing even matters of fact, that have signified not a little to the determining our judgments that way which they now incline to.

And I do particularly believe, (as I doubt not but God is graciously present with those that in the sincerity of their hearts have chosen to serve him in the way which the law prescribes, so) that if Dr. Stillingfleet had known what proofs there are of that same gracious presence, in these so much censured meetings, his thoughts would have been very different of them from what they are. I do not speak of proselyting men to a party, which I heartily despise, as a mean and inconsiderable

thing: but have known some, and heard of many instances of very ignorant and profane persons, that have been led, perhaps by their own curiosity, or it may be by the persuasion of some neighbour or friend, to hear and see what was done in such meetings, that have (through God's blessing, upon so despised means) become very much reformed men, and (for aught that could be judged) serious and sincere Christians. And whereas, some that have very prejudicial thoughts of all that frequent such meetings, may be apt to suspect all effects of that kind to be nothing else but illusions of fancy, or a disposition (at least) to enthusiasm, or an artificial and industrious hypocrisy; I am very confident, that if the doctor had had the opportunity frequently to observe and converse with such, as we have had, and heard the sobriety and consistency of their discourse, and seen the unaffected simplicity, humility, and heavenliness of their conversation, he could not have allowed himself the liberty of such hard censures, but would have judged of many such persons as you and I do.

Upon supposition of all which, I make little question but it would have been very remote from him to wish that so many persons had rather lived in sin, and perished for ever; than have been brought to repentance and a good life, by being now and then at a separate meeting.

So that for the substance of what he hath said against such meetings, we have reason to impute it to his judgment; and his judgment to such circumstances, very much, as I have mentioned, that have led him the way he hath taken; and not given him opportunity to know what might have begot a better opinion in him of the way which he opposes.

But for the *manner* of his treating of this subject, *that* I impute to the prevalency of some present temptation, and hope he did not express in that sermon his habitual temper; and am highly confident, notwithstanding what he hath said in it, if it were in his power, we might even safely trust him to prescribe us terms, and should receive no hard ones from him.

Somewhat it is likely he was expected (and might be urged) to say to this business. And his own thoughts being set a work, fermented into an intemperate heat, which, it is to be hoped, will in time evaporate.

If I may freely speak to you my own thoughts, he seems to deal in this business, as one that forced himself to say somewhat. For though I apprehend he speaks his judgment, yet the expressing it in this time and manner he might regret. And because it might appear a becoming thing to him to seem earnest, the temptation prevailed with him (against his habitual inclination) to supply with sharpness the defect of reason; which the poverty of the cause afforded not. For really his reasonings are faint, unconcluding, and unlike Dr. Stillingfleet. So that if any expected this performance from him, one may think (and this ought in some part to excuse him) that, besides some little flourishes of his reading and wit, he seems only to have lent them his name:—which, however, I pray you, let still be of great value with you; and turn your displeasure into serious, earnest praying for him, and that his spirit may not be further harmed: that, amidst his many temptations, he may be

delivered and preserved from being at all puffed up, or any way embittered; and that so valuable a person be not lost, or in the least degree rendered less useful, to the church of God: and that all that know his more inward conversation, may discern in his frequent savoury discourses, in his continued serious calling upon God in his family, in his readiness to do good, especially to the souls of men, in his aptness to condescend to those that are much beneath him, how great the efficacy is of divine grace; and that, through the power of it, a great measure of wit, learning, applause, and secular advantages, may not only consist with vivid godliness, and sincere devotedness to the interest of religion, but contribute abundantly to the service and diffusion thereof in the world. I am very serious in this advice to you; nor, thanks be to God, have so low or profane thoughts of prayer, (which hath ever borne so great a part in the religion of all times, nations, and sorts of men) as to think it will signify nothing, especially when the design of it is not mean and private, but such wherein all good men will unite.

I little doubt, but if ever there shall be good days, and a happy state of things on earth, a factious zeal for parties will become a contemptible thing: and all the discriminative accretions to religion, which are severally scandalous to all other parties except their own who embrace any sort of them, (too probably for the sake of some secular interest or other, which is hoped to be gratified and engaged thereby,) will be spontaneously quitted and abandoned by all parties, from an overpowering sense and grateful relish of substantial religion itself; *i. e.* entire devotedness to God and the Redeemer, with the joyful expectation of the blessedness of the other world: and so all become one.

But is this to be done while we sleep and do nothing? Or, have we in our circumstances, any thing to do, by which we may hope to contribute so much towards it, as by prayer? By this means, (if men of sincere and pious minds did, with universal and abstracted aims, apply themselves to this great duty) we are to reckon the blessed Spirit of holiness, love, and peace, would be more and more drawn into consent. Do you your own part herein, you will find your own present advantage by it; it will fill you with good thoughts, hopes, and expectations; the kindly benign influences whereof, will pleasantly qualify and temper your spirit, and make you know how much more grateful an inhabitant that charity is, which "thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," than frowardness, discontent, vexation, and anger, at any one that thinks and speaks otherwise than you did expect or wish. Insist upon such things in prayer, as wherein it may reasonably be expected good men shall generally agree with you. You have the more reason to expect being heard; yea, and ought to hope the spirit of this person, whom you have taken such offence at, will be rescued out of temptation, and be drawn into full consent with you. For you have no cause to doubt, but that he hath those principles wrought into the temper of his mind, which need only resuscitation, that they may dispose him to union with the whole body of sober and serious Christians of his own way, or of others, (whensoever that can be seasonably endeavoured for) upon more probable and hopeful terms than he hath proposed in this sermon. Therefore be you serious and fervent in requests to this purpose, as you have that love to

God and his church, which you profess; and that value for this worthy person, which I reckon you still ought to have: or (if that can be fit to be added) any kindness for,

Sir,

Your affectionate servant, &c.

Since my writing these pages, I hear of answers to the Dean's sermon; which, in so remote a corner, I have had no opportunity to see: what is here written may therefore (upon comparing) be communicated, or suppressed, as shall be thought fit.

And so I should take leave of you, but that it may be needful, whereas I have principally considered in these papers the case of such as think it unlawful to join in the public assemblies, to add somewhat (whomsoever it may serve) in reference to their case that think otherwise. For to say the truth, this is here the more common case. And though the Doctor believes they that frequent the separate meetings, do generally judge it unlawful to join in the public; howsoever it is with you, (and it is likely the Doctor speaks of what is more within the compass of his own knowledge, or theirs who inform him:) it is with us in this part of the country quite contrary. And I may truly say, that in this place, (and others where I have sometimes occasionally been) the generality of them who come to the other meetings do also attend the public.

Now these may perhaps think themselves left under blame, and may apprehend the Doctor's consequence is strong against them, (that if occasional communion be lawful, constant communion must be a duty:) which he, no doubt, understands exclusively of any distinct way of communion.

And if, indeed, they judge that consequence strong, I would fain know what hurt they can think it doth them? Why should any man be afraid of his duty, or of the truth which makes it known? And if, hereupon, they can, with the satisfaction of their own consciences, waive all other opportunities of worshipping God with others of his people, they have the less to do; and why should they complain who are satisfied?

But in short, either they apprehend such other additional means a real necessary help and advantage to them, or they do not. If they do not, they have no cause to trouble themselves, nor to grudge that so much is said for others; whose, for aught I know, may, as the Doctor thinks, (for I cannot make an estimate from this or that little spot) be the much more common case. If they do, they have little reason to be concerned about the Doctor's consequence: which I must wonder if he himself can think strong. It hath not, you see, been altogether overlooked in the foregoing discourse: and if any feel themselves wounded by it, he is so great an Achilles, that they may have their wound and healing from the same hand. For, as hath been noted from him in his

preface to the *Irenicum*, he seems plainly to intimate that men have no charter, or grant of divine power, to make other conditions of church communion than Christ hath made. If so, then the conditions by which this way of communion is distinguished from the other, (supposing they be lawful) are still, in themselves, matter of liberty, not of duty: and so it is left to the prudence of a Christian to determine him (as in all like cases) this way or that, as will make most for the common good, consistently with that of his own soul. That is sin or duty which, in this or that case, will do more hurt or good. There being no particular rule to guide a man's practice, he must have recourse to that general one: by which it may be my duty, upon some great reason, to do that at one time, which, for as great reason, I ought not to do in a continued course. And it is highly commendable, when a Christian understands the latitude which the law of Christ hath left him; is, in his own spirit, exempt from servile restraints, by other imagined bonds; and can with a generous liberty (pure from base self-respects) turn himself this way or that, as shall make most for the service of the ends he lives for. And when any accordingly use that liberty, it is a fancy of none but half-witted persons, to think they must therefore addict themselves to this or that party.

If a man's case come to be so stated, that he hath reason to apprehend it will do more good than hurt to others, that he own a sort of Christians, who have particularly modified themselves, otherwise than they needed by any divine injunction, (or by any that God hath empowered men to put them under) by communicating with them under the common notion of Christians, only, not as so modified; he doth but express the genuine complexion of a truly Christian spirit. But he is not to do so in a continued course, if he find it will be a real damage to his own soul, in comparison of another way that he finds more edifying. Perhaps, if he will be religious only after the mode of this or that party, his fare may be either too fine or too coarse for his constant diet. I may, besides my own inclination, drink a single glass of wine out of civility to one person, or of water, to another, when I am not, for any man's pleasure, to destroy my health by tying myself to drink nothing else. And whatever Christian condescendingness and goodness of temper may prompt a man to, who makes not what others do, but what they ought to do, his rule and measure; they have least reason to expect much compliance from others, who bind themselves up within their own party, are enwrapt as leviathan in his scales, call themselves the church, (as many say, "Here is Christ, and there is Christ") and call all men separatists that will not be of their church. And perhaps they assume and appropriate the name with no more pretence or colour, and with no better sense, than if a humoursome company of men should distinguish themselves from others by wearing a blue or a yellow girdle, and call themselves mankind. Do not too many in our days distinguish their church and Christian communion, by things no more belonging to a church, or to Christianity, than a girdle of this or that colour to human nature; and which no more qualify for Christian society, than that doth for human? If, however, an ingenuous, free-spirited man, out of respect to his present company, or for any other valuable reason, should in such a case put on the blue girdle, I shall find no fault with him. But if any should go about to pinch him too

close with it, so as would be inconvenient to his ease and health, or oblige him to protest against the true humanity of all that neglect it, I doubt not he would throw it away with scorn. Much less would he be a confederate with them that use it, if they professedly combine for the destruction of the rest of mankind that use it not, when many of them that refuse it apprehend it a real grievance. Especially, when they that would impose it live with many of the rest under the government of a just and sovereign prince, from whom they have no charter for their imposition, but who hath declared he will not have his subjects so imposed upon.

In sum, we are all indispensably obliged by our Lord Jesus Christ, the sovereign Prince and Ruler of his church, to the substance of all Christian ordinances. As to uninstituted modes thereof, we are free. And they that understand their liberty, may use or not use them as is more for their own and the common good. They that understand it not, and think themselves under an obligation from Christ not to admit questionable, devised additions into their worship; they are not therefore to deprive themselves of the substantial ordinances of the Christian religion, whereof there is no question.

I shut up all with the words of the great apostle, (Rom. xiv. 3, 4,) "One believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, for God hath received him." *v.* 13, "Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way."

II.

SOME CONSIDERATION

OF A

PREFACE TO AN INQUIRY

CONCERNING

THE OCCASIONAL CONFORMITY OF DISSENTERS,

ETC.

I HOPE your public challenge, Mr. Prefacer, (as you only allow me to call you) was given with an honest intention. Yet with what kindness or equity you could make your first onset in the view of the world by hiding your own name, and exposing mine, designing yourself to fight in the dark, and expecting me to do it in open light, I leave to your own (perhaps calmer) second thoughts. I might hereupon, as I promise myself, be justified in the opinion of competent and impartial judges, if I had disappointed you in not writing; but I am apt to think I shall disappoint you more, in what I shall write upon this occasion. Yet, not at all for this reason (for I thank God, I hold no opinion which I am ashamed to own to the world,) but for what is with me of far greater weight, I have, for a long time, had an habitual aversion in my own mind, from perplexing myself, or disturbing others, by being concerned in agitating the controversies that have been on foot, about the circumstantials of our religion. I hope it will offend nobody, if I recite somewhat of what I wrote almost thirty years ago, in the epistle prefixed to a treatise on Delighting in God, *viz.* thus:

"I have reflected and considered with some satisfaction that this hath been my way, and the temper of my mind among you,* *viz.* to recommend the serious practice of the great things of religion, which are known and least liable to question, without designing to engage you to, or against, any party of them that differ about circumstantial matters. Great reason I have to repent, that I have not with greater earnestness pressed upon you the known and important things wherein serious Christians do generally agree: but I repent not that I have so little engaged in the hot contests of our age about the things wherein they differ. For, as I pretend to little light in these things; (whence I could not have much confidence to fortify me unto such an undertaking) so I must profess to have little inclination to contend about matters of that

* The inhabitants of Torrington, magistrates and people, to whom this discourse was dedicated.

kind. Nor yet am I indifferent as to those smaller things, that I cannot discern to be in their own nature so. But though I cannot avoid to think that course right which I have deliberately chosen therein, I do yet esteem that but a small thing upon which to ground an opinion of my excelling them that think otherwise, as if I knew more than they. For I have often recounted thus seriously with myself, that of every differing party, (in those circumstantial matters) I do particularly know some persons by whom I find myself much excelled in far greater things than is the matter of that difference. I cannot (it is true) thereupon say and think every thing that they do; which is impossible, since they differ from one another as well as me: and I understand well, there are other measures of truth than this or that excellent person's opinion: but I therefore reckon, I have little reason to be conceited of any advantage I have of such in point of knowledge, (even as little as he should have that can sing, or play well on a lute, of him that knows how to command armies, or govern a kingdom;) and can with the less confidence differ from them, or contend with them: being thereby, though I cannot find that I err in these matters, constrained to have suspicion lest I do; and to admit it possible enough, that some of them who differ from me, having much more light in greater matters, may have so in these also. Besides, that I most seriously think, humility, charity, and patience would more contribute to the composing of these lesser differences, or to the good estate of the Christian interest under them, than the most fervent disputes and contestations. I have upon such considerations little concerned myself in contending for one way or another whilst I was among you; or in censuring such as have differed from me in such notions or practices as might consist with our common great end; or as imported not manifest hostility thereto: contenting myself to follow the course that to my (preponderating) judgment seemed best, without stepping out of my way to justle others."

This was long before, and hath been ever since the constant temper of my mind, in reference to matters of this kind. I have contented myself by the best means I could be furnished with, and the best use God enabled me to make of them, so far to form and settle my judgment, as was absolutely necessary to my own practice; not taking my measures from what I was to hope or fear, of worldly advantage or disadvantage, reputation or disreputation; but in what way, as my case was to be circumstanced, I might walk most agreeably to the common Christian rule, the holy word of God, and best serve the proper ends of life; do most good in the world, and, as my calling obliged me, most promote the common salvation. And that judgment, once formed, and preponderating to the way I chose, I have endeavoured faithfully to follow. Herein my heart reproaches me not, and I hope, shall not, as long as I live.

In the mean time, I have abstained from censuring others, who have taken a different way. I have rejoiced in the seriousness and success of any such, in their ministerial work, and in the liberty they had for public service, which I had not. I usually pray for a blessing upon their labours, as upon my own. My converse hath been as free, and pleasant, with divers of them, as with others that were entirely agreed with me in circumstantial matters. Nor have I felt any inclination in my mind, to controvert with them the matters of difference between

us; but have even, in our converse, forgot that we differed, having no more cause to suspect hurt from them, than they from me. Where is the man that can say I ever persuaded him to conform, or not to conform?

This disinclination with me to controversies of any such kind hath proceeded from sundry reasons. My judgment was already so far settled in these things, as was necessary to my own practice. I reckoned an unproportionable measure of the short time we have to live in this world, was not to be taken up about them: that it consisted not with a man's designed progress towards his end, to be always, or too long, inquiring about his way: that disputes of that kind have little savour in them, compared with the great, agreed matters of our faith and hope. I was loath to disquiet others, or cast stumbling-blocks before them who seemed as well satisfied in their way, as I was in mine. I observed such altercations seldom better men's spirits, but that often they make them worse. I had a great reverence for divers that differed from me in these things; I knew several of them to be much superior to me, in all sorts of more valuable knowledge; as also I did of them that therein agreed with me. Comparisons I thought odious and vain. I could not be of every worthy and good man's mind, when they were not all of the same mind. I had enough, I thought, to satisfy myself in reference to my own practice, not enough to change theirs; or enable me to set up to be a decider of such controversies. It was remote from me to think sincere religion, either confined to any party, distinguished by these little things, or excluded from any: that the kingdom of God consisted not in them, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. I have thought, that as things that were most necessary, were most plain; so things that were so very little plain, were the less necessary. Those particles of matter must have very little of real entity in them, that escape the *acies*, and discerning, of the finest and quickest eye. I have hardly known any point in metaphysics or scholastic divinity, disputed with greater niceness and subtilty than our controversy about the ceremonies; and though I never thought myself to be any of the quickest in the art of disputing, yet I think, taking which side I will in this disputation, I could easily puzzle the most of plain people, and that are but of an ordinary understanding, about them; much more easily than I could convince or satisfy them, (or perhaps, did myself) the one way or the other.

The matter were indeed easy, if (for instance) in a select gathered church, (of one or other whereof I suppose you are) one conscience, or a few men's, would serve for the whole body; or, by parity of cases, of a whole parish or nation. But when we consider, that every one must give an account of himself to God; and that in matters which concern our own duty God-ward, we are no more capable of having it done by another for us, than (as a noted person in our time aptly speaks) of being represented by another in the day of judgment; this will bring the matter with weight upon our own spirits, lest we should be found transgressors in Bethel, and to have offered strange fire, instead of a sacrifice, on the one hand; or needlessly, on the other hand, set on fire the temple itself. This will, in God's time, I doubt not, be considered by such as can make the occasion cease of such difficulties. In the mean time, it is of great consolation to those that sincerely fear God,

that if with upright minds they principally study to approve themselves to him, and if they mistake, do only err for fear of erring; he will not with severity animadvert upon the infirmity of a weak and merely misguided judgment.

It is a most sure truth, and worth all this world, that to an honest, unbiassed heart, it is a far easier thing to please God than men. I have also considered, that some that can contend fervently, and conclude positively, concerning church power, where it is lodged, and how far it can extend, in making rules and inflicting censures, discover too often more confidence than knowledge and solid judgment, in those very things themselves; but much oftener, little of the Spirit of Christ and the gospel; little of that meekness, humility, charity, that are most essential and inward to true Christianity; and are too apt to magnify the—"tithing of mint, anise, and cummin," above faith, mercy, and the love of God. I have sometimes thought that to be somewhat instructive which is storied of Plato,* that having one in his academy that had great skill in driving a chariot with that exactness, as not to swerve one jot from the lines on which the wheels were very swiftly to move; nor could be satisfied until he had prevailed with that great man to be the spectator of his performance herein; he was so far from applauding him, that, turning away with contempt, he said, "They that mind, with such exactness, little things, will never mind great." I detract nothing from the exact care that ought to be had in observing God's own revelations and injunctions; if you understand aright, under what notion, and for what ends he intended them. Nothing is to be thought little in religion, that truly belongs to it. But, sir, if you should take upon you to devise rules and measures of your own, and then put a sacredness upon them; yea, more, insist to have them observed with greater strictness, and for more distinguishing purposes, than ever God intended divers of his own revelations for;—this I must tell you were bold and extravagant. And how you are concerned herein, we shall see in the progress of this discourse.

To come somewhat closer to you, therefore, Mr. Prefacer, I shall first consider how reasonably and justly you offer to engage me in this quarrel; and this will lead me on to take a view of your treatment of that honourable person, against whom your quarrel is more principally meant. As to your endeavour to involve me in this affair, I think before you had offered at it, you should have been well assured of these two things; at least of the one or the other of them. First—that I really did concern myself to advise, one way or other, as to the lawfulness or unlawfulness of that occasional conformity, about which you contend: Secondly,—that I ought to have done so. If neither of these can be made to appear, I cannot but think it was a distemper of mind, an immoderate scripturiency, or what shall I call it? too great an affectation of intermeddling beyond any call you had, that could lead you to it. And whereas you think you have not exceeded, herein, the rules of charity or good manners;—as to point of *manners*, I will not take upon me to be your judge; I believe you guess me to be no master of ceremonies. But as to the much greater business of *charity*, I must talk with you more about that before we part. For it is a matter of much greater

* Æl. Var. Hist.

compass; and in your measures and exercise whereof, the generality of serious Christians are concerned as well as I. But, as concerning myself, can you make either of these appear?

As to the former, I am sure you cannot, nor any man. Nor ought you to have presumed it, unless you had been sure of the *second*, that I ought. I, for my part, judged I ought not. Whether I did truly judge, or no, that leads into the main cause that will lie between us, wherein I shall be no less cautious than you, though therein I shall not so far compliment you, as to pretend I more follow your example in it than my own inclination, *i.e.* I shall not undertake to determine, whether the action (as circumstanced) of that honourable personage you principally reflect upon, were lawful or unlawful. This I meddle not with; and you pretend to decline it too; (either you, or the author you recommend and follow, which is all one to me) *viz.* the question, whether this or that communion be lawful or unlawful; but are so little true to that pretence, as to judge that person who occasionally partakes in the legally established church's communion, unfit ever after to be received, otherwise than as a penitent, to any other Christian communion. And I think no man is to do the part of a penitent, but for what was unlawful, or a fault.

Now I, for my part, shall not take so much upon me as to determine, not being called, if I were never so competent, whether there were any thing faulty in that action or no. But in this I am neither in doubt, nor without a sufficient occasion to declare, that I can judge it no such fault, (if it be one,) as should exclude one, that in all other respects, appears a serious and an orderly Christian, from any other Christian communion to which he may have thought fit to adjoin himself. And that I may set in view the ground for my not judging otherwise, and for the following discourse, we must distinguish,—

I. Of the obligation of precepts negative and affirmative, or against sins and unto duties, *viz.* against or unto such things as, by those precepts, become sins or duties. And of these I shall speak only so far as concerns our present purpose, *i.e.* as they are to come under consideration, *in foro ecclesiæ*, or in a visible church of Christ. And so, there are sins consistent with the Christian state; and there are sins inconsistent with it, or destructive of it:—duties that are matter of simple precept, and duties that are also conditions of Christian communion. We are also to distinguish the obligation of negative and affirmative precepts, as it is usual and common, *viz.* that the former bind (unless the precept were repealed) *semper et ad semper*, always, and to every point of time: the latter, always while the precept stands in force, but not to every point of time. Of this we shall make the proper use, in the fit place.

II. Of the different notions under which, or causes for which, men of different sentiments, or persuasions, may decline the communion of this or that church; *viz.* *Some* may decline the communion of this or that church, as judging it essentially defective, so as not to have in it the essentials of a Christian church. (Whether that judgment be right or wrong, true or false, is not now the question; or under our present consideration.) *Others* may decline it, as judging it defective in respect of some accidentals, or circumstances; either simply considered, or compared with some other Christian church, that they may apprehend to come nearer the Christian rule, and wherein the administration of Christ's

ordinances may be more profitable, and tend more to their advantage and benefit in their spiritual concernments.

These distinctions we shall consider severally, both by way of explication and application to the present case.

For the former. When we speak of sins consistent, or inconsistent, with the Christian state; of duties that are merely such, or that also are required as necessary to Christian communion, we intend the distinction as referring to visible Christianity:—and mean, that as there are sins inconsistent with visible Christianity; avowed atheism, open idolatry, infidelity, apostacy, total, or in respect to some or other known fundamental of Christian religion; contumacious, and continuing rebellion against the authority and known laws of Christ; which, without visibly serious repentance and reformation, slur and deface a man's character, as a visible Christian:—so there may be faults that do it not; which may yet come under common notice, or view. I only instance in what is more agreeable to our present case; as, misjudging in some circumstantial matters, and very disputable, that are extra-essential to the substance of Christianity; and practising according to that erring and mistaken judgment; even though the mistake be continued, never discerned, and never repented of, or reformed as long as one lives.

Such were the differences in judgment and practice about meats and days, (Rom. xiv. 2,) &c. wherein there could not but be right and wrong. Both sides could not be in the right, *i. e.* referring their practice to their judgment. The question being, whether such and such things were lawful or unlawful; and that the one side judged them lawful, the other, unlawful. The one side must be in the wrong. The things about which they differed, could not be both lawful and unlawful. It must be sin to judge and do amiss; duty, to judge aright, and practise accordingly. And what was now to be done in this case? Were they to excommunicate, and curse, and damn one another? Some that presided in the Christian Church did, it is true, in process of time, come to use an unchristian severity in such cases. As when some tied themselves to the eating of herbs only, and abstained from flesh, (whether they derived their opinion from the school of Pythagoras, or however they came by it, matters not;) and it was determined concerning them, (I could show where and when, were it needful,) that if they would use abstinence, upon other considerations, they might; but if upon a judgment, or opinion, that the eating of flesh was unlawful, they should be excommunicated. And this was thought a sufficient reason for that hard censure, because they denied Christ to have given that liberty, as to meats, which he had really given. But was this according to the mind of God? No, quite contrary; we see it otherwise determined by apostolical authority; "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. Rom. xiv. 1. The case follows. The charge is, "Receive them; take them into your communion; and dispute not his doubting judgment with him, or pass you no judgment upon it, so as to vex or disquiet him with it. Let him alone with his judgment and practice together; but receive him." And the forementioned rigour we find to have been corrected in after-time.

And the like charges are elsewhere given in reference to the differences between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians, the circumcised and the uncircumcised; *i. e.* that in the Christian state, no distinction

was to be made of Jews or Greeks; circumcision, or uncircumcision; them that used or disused the Jewish rites and ceremonies; but all were to be esteemed as one in Christ Jesus, or Christ to be all in all among them: (Gal. iii. 28; Col. iii. 11;) *i. e.* God makes no difference, supposing they be good men, sincere Christians, or become new creatures; he stands neither upon their being circumcised, or uncircumcised, (Gal. vi. 15;) retaining or quitting the subsequent Judaical observances. So tenderly, and by so gentle a hand, did the divine wisdom and goodness draw off the Judaizing Christians from those things, whereof he designed the total abolition; whereof they had more pretence to be tenacious, being things enjoined by God himself. Therefore God treats them with more indulgence. And what example should we rather choose to follow? Especially, what indulgence doth the case itself challenge, in not pressing, under penalty, what there can be no pretence of divine authority for? And we find this is the measure according to which we are to go, in receiving persons into our communion. We are to receive such as we have reason to think God receives; in the forecited, Rom. xiv. 3.—Do not judge, but receive him, for God hath received him.

There are therefore two plain rules, laid down by that great apostle, in reference to such dubious and small matters; *viz.* concerning such scrupulous persons themselves, that they be fully persuaded in their own minds, (*v.* 5,) and do nothing against the judgment of their own consciences in those matters; which he enforces, (*v.* 23:) the other concerning the carriage of fellow-Christians towards them, that they judge them not, but receive them. *v.* 1—10. Whereupon, Mr. Prefacer, I conceive myself clear in not judging. And you will be clear in judging, if not only you are an abler judge, (which I will never dispute with you,) but also, that you were called to judge; and that your judgment is most assuredly true. If God have authorized you, and revealed to you, not only what was right or wrong, in the case itself, but the secrets of his heart whom you judge; and that he practised what he thought to be wrong: *i. e.* that he is a hypocrite, and that he hath against his conscience yielded to do that for (an unprofitable) preferment, probably to his great loss, (as some have found it) which he himself thought unlawful: if you know him to be of so vain and light a mind, that, not for any real advantage, but for a little temporary, evanid honour and gaiety, he hath offered this violence to the judgment of his own conscience; if God revealed this to you, and charged you to proclaim it to the world; then hath he indeed set you over him, and far above him; placed you in a much higher seat of judicature, than that wherein he is seated; dignified you with an authority superior to what he ever conferred upon any apostle, or on the whole Christian church, or on any, besides his own Son.

But if there be nothing of all this; then, though your judgment should happen to be true, yet if it were without any ground upon which you could know it to be true, and so it were only right by chance; if it were without call; if you had nothing to do with the matter; if it come among the exempted cases reserved by the great God to his own tribunal, and which he has subjected to no ecclesiastical, nor human cognizance;—being, as to the matter itself, very minute, not so much as a doubtful action, but the circumstance of an action, and that touches

not any vital of religion;—as to the lawfulness of that circumstance, disputable; a ceremony;—one of them that were not less disputed, by men of excellent wisdom and piety on both sides, than the Jewish ones, in the time when they were matter of controversy to the Christian church:—and after all that disputation, determinable, for aught I know, chiefly by the *majus* or *minus bonum ecclesiæ;* as, in the time when that Jewish rite of circumcision was the occasion of so much disquiet to the primitive Christians, St. Paul circumcised Timothy for the greater service of the Christian interest; and being, as to the inward intention, motive, and inducement, secret, and liable only to the divine view; then, I say, upon all this, even supposing the thing you censure were faulty, yet it is no such fault as can slur the character of a man, otherwise appearing a serious Christian. If the contrary were duty, it is no such duty as is necessary to entitle a man to any Christian communion. Yea, and I add, your censuring it as you do, is a thousand fold (even unconceivably) more faulty. And if you could truly say, as Diogenes did, trampling upon Plato's rich bed, *calco Platonis fastum*, "I tread upon Plato's pride," it might more justly be replied, as the latter did reply, *sed majori fastu*, "but you do it with greater pride." You take upon you to invade the throne of the Most High; and may take that as said to you, "Who art thou that judgest another's servant? Why dost thou judge thy brother? We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." Rom. xiv. 4—10. And I wonder you did not dread those awful words of that very Judge, (Matt. vii. 1,) "Judge not, that ye be not judged:" and shall more wonder if yet you perceive not, when you thought a mote was in another's eye, that there was a beam in your own, as *v.* 3—a thing that among heathens* has been animadverted on with just severity. Nor shall I re-charge you in the following words, "Thou hypocrite," (for I know not your heart in this matter) but I would have you re-consider with how little warrant you have broadly charged that worthy person your quarrel is about, with hypocrisy; that he acted against his own conscience, because he acted not according to yours: as if yours were to be the standard, and the conscience-general to mankind! But that you may apprehend it not impossible for a man to follow the dictate of conscience, and perhaps as good a one as yours, though he do not follow yours; I shall yet have recourse to a second distinction, before laid down, *viz.* between the different notions under which, or causes for which, men of different sentiments may decline the communion of this or that church, *viz.* some, as thinking it essentially defective—others, as judging it defective in some circumstances only. Now, sir, if any man decline the communion of what is (however) vulgarly called a church, as counting it really no church at all, his withdrawing or abstaining from its communion must be total and constant, he can have no communion with it, as a Christian church, at all. But if one avoid more ordinary communion with a church, as judging it, though not essentially defective, yet to want, or err in, some circumstances so considerable, as that he counts another church comes nearer the common Christian rule, the holy Scriptures;

* Cum tua pervideas oculis mala lippus inunctis,
Cur in amicorum vitiis tam cernis acutum,
Quam aut aquila, aut serpens Epidaurius?—Hor.
(And many others of them abound with like passages.)

and finds its administrations more conducing to his spiritual advantage; he may be led by the judgment of his conscience, both, sometimes upon weighty and important reasons, to communicate with the former, and continue therein, according as these reasons shall continue urgent upon him; and yet, sometimes, as the cessant, or diminished weight of such reasons shall allow, to communicate with the other.

They that will not admit of this distinction, thus generally proposed, as a ground of such different practice in the general as is here expressed; but judge not only essential perfection, but a perfection by the concurrence of all desirable accidents, to be necessary also unto Christian communion, can have no communion with any Christian church on earth; for where is any to be found every way perfect? It is true that accidental defects may be more or less, and it requires great accuracy to apply what is here generally said to particular cases; nor shall that be my present business; I have somewhat else of greater importance to do. All that I concern myself for, is only to have it considered, that a man of conscience may, upon the grounds generally mentioned, vary his communion, as hath been said; while he keeps himself within the limits of a Christian church, essentially true, and that hath no additions destructive of that essence. And if he mistake in making application hereof to a particular case, it proves him not to be a man of a profligate conscience, or of none at all. He may have arguments so specious, that supposing he err, may impose upon the judgment, and thereby direct the practice of a very intelligent, discerning, and upright-hearted man: so as to make him think that which is perhaps an error, his present duty; and so not offer violence to his conscience, in what he so doth. As judging such a church true as to essentials, he may think (occasion inviting) he hath greater reason, though it be defective in accidents, to communicate with it sometimes, than to shun its communion always; since those Christians that agree in all the essentials of Christianity, agree in far greater things than it is possible for them to disagree in. He must have mean and mis-shapen thoughts of Christian religion, that thinks not the great doctrines of faith, ordinances of worship, and rules of daily practice, (common to us all) unspeakably more valuable than this or that external mode or form of religion, that is but accidentally, and mutably, adherent thereto. And what if some have thought that alone a sufficient reason for their occasional communion with a church with which they have not constant communion, that they may do it and themselves that right before the world, as to testify they decline it not as no church; but so far practically own it, as the reason of the thing requires: why may they not be supposed to do this, as thinking it a good reason, whether it really be so or no, without going against conscience herein? And yet the same person may, perhaps, think the communion of another church preferable, and, for ordinary resort, rather to be chosen, as wherein he finds the same essence, with more regular, grateful, and advantageous modes and ways of administrations.

And if hereupon it should be said, But since, sir, you think it not unlawful to communicate with such a church sometimes, why should you not, for common order's sake, do it always?

May he not reply, Pardon me in that, good sir, if I think I owe more to what I take for Christ's rule, and to the discernible advantage

of my own soul; judging, in these respects, that communion to be best which I more constantly adhere to. I say, why may not an honest, well-meaning man reason thus, and do accordingly, (whether his sentiments herein be right or wrong) without gainsaying his own conscience? And the rather, for that the church itself, with which he more ordinarily communicates not, (as comprehended in the states of the realm) so far gives him the liberty of his choice, as to reckon his doing herein what is more for his satisfaction and advantage, no punishable thing. Why may he not conscientiously say, "Let me be excused, if I do not compliment away things that are to me of so great importance; and which they to whom I give it cannot but count a profane sort of compliment?"

Question.—But should not the latitude of a Christian carry him to fix his communion with the larger and more extensive church?

Answer.—What! Should the latitude of a Christian bind him to one sort of Christians, with exclusion of all other? Never was that noble principle of true Christian latitude more perverted, or turned even against itself, than if it be used to train men into a religious bigotry! As if the apostle's professing to be all things to all men, to the Jews as a Jew, &c. must signify that he take one side, and engage with the Jews against the Gentiles! They that refuse confinement to the largest church may avoid it, not because they should otherwise express too much latitude, but too little.

Some may here, perhaps, say, "What one judges best ought to be chosen always." And indeed nothing is more easy, or ordinary, than for them that have little compass of thought, to pronounce hastily, and conclude peremptorily, even beyond seven men that can render a reason. How would such a one stare, if one should oppose a downright negative to his confident assertion, and say, What is best, in matter of practice, is not to be chosen and done always! It is not enough to justify such a choice and practice, that it be in itself, or simply, best; but that it be best in present circumstances, and, all things considered that ought to be considered, in the present juncture.

Let here another distinction be remembered, before laid down. Negative precepts oblige to every point of time. Affirmative do not so. He that is always under obligation to pray solemnly, is not obliged to be always solemnly at prayer. The worship of God is better than most actions of our lives, yet the saving of a town, or house from fire, yea, the plucking of a sheep or an ox out of a ditch, is, sometimes to be preferred. The most sacred external act of duty becomes a sin, when it excludes that which is more a duty at that time. How fatal! how totally destructive an error might it have proved, before, to the Jewish nation, always to have thought it unlawful to defend themselves on the sabbath-day!* How long was sacramental obsignation in the wilderness omitted! How much more may attending upon such an institution in, what some may think, a more eligible manner, if there be a reason that outweighs; when, not the substance of the ordinance is wanting, but what is counted (perhaps by you) a fitter modus!

To be plain with you, Mr. Prefacer, suppose you judge kneeling at the Lord's table a sin, (as cautious as you are, not to seem to take this or that side in these controversies, wherein you, however, unwarily be-

* As it was once said to have been, Plutarch, de Superst.

trayed yourself as hath been noted; yet my supposing it doth you no hurt) and suppose you judge another gesture a duty; suppose you judge concurrence in the use of the liturgy, a sin, and the unprescribed way (by human authority) a duty; yet who hath empowered you to make such sins (if they were such) exclusive from Christian communion? or such duties, conditions of it? Sometime, surely, it will be understood how bold an adventure it is to make terms of Christian communion, which Christ hath never made. There are sins and duties, immediately by God's law itself, that he never intended to be so characteristical, *viz.* of the unfit or fit subjects of Christian communion. For, what! Hath God forbidden any to be admitted to Christian communion, but such as are perfect in knowledge and holiness? How bold a self-assuming then is it in you, not only to make sins and duties which God hath never made so; but also to make them distinguishing terms of Christian communion! which is far higher, and the more insolent usurpation! You know, or it is meet for you so to judge, that many pious men dare not partake of the Lord's supper, otherwise than kneeling. And I have been sufficiently assured concerning divers of eminent sanctity, that they have been as greatly affected, and had as high elevations of soul in the use of the Common Prayer, as others in any other way of devotion.

Now, Mr. Prefacer, ought another man's gust to have been the measure of theirs? Would you have these men excluded from all Christian worship, *viz.* in society with Christian worshippers? To say, Let them worship God with those of their own way, is to say you know not what. For if (as by your rule it seems to be determined) the things are unlawful and exclusive from all Christian communion in worship, there ought to be none of any such way that they can worship with. And now, Sir, if that be your conscience, that supposing there be never so many thousands in a Christian nation that cannot worship God in your way, you would have them paganized, made as heathens and publicans; God bless me from your conscience! And shall this be your way of recommending yourself to Christian communion? Wheresoever such a spirit appears of zeal against such and such external forms; (or if it be for them, it is all one to me;) of pride and self-esteem, for so contemptibly little things; of malice and cruelty, that they could persecute even to the death, if it were in their power, or into strange countries, such as differ from them in things of no greater moment: I would sooner be of a fellowship with drunkards, or other sensualists, (though I hope God will keep me from both) than with them; as much as I count a devil somewhat a worse thing than a brute. Nor can it be said, that herein Satan is transformed into an angel of light; his transformation is, at least, in this, very inartificial. He apparently enough shows himself to belong to the darkest region. And whereas some such may talk of offering strange fire, because it comes not from their altar; their fire is as much stranger than Nadab's and Abihu's, as common, unconsecrated fire differs from infernal.

You will say, These human forms, and other devices they are so much set upon, are sins. Sins! but I ask, Do they unchristian a man? They will be much more over-magnified, by so fervent opposition, than by serious use. But what would I do in such a case? Would I not reject a man from the Lord's table, how serious soever, that would not communicate otherwise than kneeling? No, God forbid! let him use

his own freedom, and be fully persuaded in his own mind; he shall not offend me. And though there was a time when Christians were forbidden kneeling at all on the Lord's day; I had rather that human institution were neglected, than any good man debarred of so useful an ordinance. I should never quarrel with any man for that gesture itself. But I should like no one's choice of it the better, that should pretend to choose it for a moral reason: for instance, as expressive of greater reverence; because a moral reason must immediately bind conscience, and is of universal extent, must equally concern all; whence, this would imply an accusation of all other Christian churches that use not this gesture as irreverent, or less reverent than they ought to be. Nor can there be any other measure of *debitum*, or of that which ought to be, but some law or other; nor can there be any law of universal obligation, but by a universal law-giver. This would therefore insinuate an accusation of our Lord himself, of neglect in not making such a law, and in allowing a different gesture to his disciples, when he first appointed that ordinance. For though their gesture was not sitting, it is more probable to have been such as was used in those times and countries for their ordinary table gesture. And this other I should use, being in communion with those that use it, rather not to offend them, than please the master of the house, or to satisfy my own conscience, as if it were in itself a sin not to use it. But for them that use it on that account, *i. e.* of conscience towards God; I should, according to the mentioned rule, not judge, but receive them.

And whereas, some may think it would introduce confusion into the church, that all should not be confined to one gesture in such an act of worship, it would be a worse confusion to have serious Christians, because their conscience obliges them to kneel when others do not, mingled with turks and infidels. Nor is that oneness of gesture more necessary to any order that is itself necessary, than that all that partake together in such an ordinance be of one stature, size, or sex; or wear all garments of the same shape or colour. I hope for a time, when Christianity will be the religion of the world. While it is cramped it will never grow. I hope it not to prevail in the world, by having all the world, in every minute thing, reduced to the model of this or that party. How absurdly arrogant would he be that should pray that all the world might be of one mind, by being all brought to be, in every nice punctilio, of his mind! When I see partition walls taken down, truly Catholic Christianity coming into repute, a readiness and promptness of mind to be all things to all men, in the apostle's true meaning: when the great things of religion do more engage men's minds, and they cease to magnify trifles; when as to faults, (real or supposed,) men no longer strain at gnats and swallow camels; when the love of God comes to govern the Christian church, and reign in the hearts of men; then will the kingdom of God come with power. For I am sure the spirit of love is the spirit of power, and of a sound mind. In the mean time, I declare myself (as I have often) to be of no party, self-distinguished by so little things. Nor, when the visible church of Christ on earth comes to be confessedly composed (as of old) only of three sorts, catechumens, penitents, and the fideles, with their infants, can it be any great or insuperable difficulty whom we are to receive into our communions, and whom we are to exclude.

And thus, Mr. Prefacer, I have said all I intend, as to the main of your cause, *i. e.* Whether they that shall not be of your mind, when such a case occurs to them as that about which you litigate, and shall practise otherwise, (*i. e.* shall not please you) should, therefore, except they repent, be excluded all other Christian communion? I shall say no more to it, except what may occasionally fall in, upon my giving some short remarks as to the manner of your treating such worthy persons, whose judgment and practice agree not with yours. Herein, because I never intended to answer your book, (thinking what I have said makes that needless) I shall only note some passages from it, here and there.

And I begin with the title-page. Where, I pray you, inquire of your own heart, what you meant by that suggestion, "in cases of preferment?" Was it not to insinuate, that preferment was the inducement to that worthy person, to act against his own conscience in that case; when it was his known judgment, testified by his practice several years before? Herein you should have been sure. You meddled with a two-edged weapon, wherewith you vainly aimed to wound him, (for a sincere conscience is invulnerable) but have most certainly wounded yourself. You may in time feel the wound; it is worse while you do not. If he can sincerely appeal to the Searcher of hearts, (as for aught you know, he can) Lord, thou knowest this man hath wronged me; I would not have such an appeal lying in heaven against me for all the world! How can you tell but that such a thing was designed, and done, with a sincere aim and intention of mind? Among heathens it hath not been unknown, that some having honorary coronets conferred upon them, consecrated them to their gods.* Is it impossible somewhat like it should be done by a Christian to the true and living God? Are you so much a stranger to a devoted life, as not to think this possible? You have wronged him, when without ground you judged otherwise; but you wronged the great God infinitely more, whose throne you presumed to usurp. And you should have been able, before you concluded with so rash confidence, to prove the act, in its circumstance, unlawful. If it were lawful, go among them you thought to gratify, and inquire who of them will think a consequent preferment could make it unlawful. Therefore your insinuation, except wherein it is spiteful and mischievous, is idle and vain.

Again, your subjoined text of Scripture, "If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal"—for what purpose was it set there? What! to signify that the God of the dissenters, and of the established church, differ as the living God and Baal? Did you take this for a piece of wit? It was uncharitable. Uncharitable! that is a trifle in comparison; it was profane and most impious wit; yet you are mighty fond of the conceit, and we have it over and over in the book, that the conformists and dissenters serve two Gods (as the one of them is miscalled) and have two religions! The Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, and as truly the congregations of England, to place his name in them, (and whom, as invocated in many, and for aught appears you intend, in most of them, you blaspheme as a senseless idol) rebuke, and forgive you!

This may occasion some idle people to cry out, "What! at church in

* Athen. Deipnos. cum animadvers. Is. Casaub.

the forenoon, and at a meeting-house in the afternoon! This is fine! And what will now become of our religion?" And what is already become of his religion, who so exclaims? Do the religion of the church and of the meeting-house make two religions? Wherein do they differ? The substance of the same religion is common to them both. Therefore the modes and accidents, wherein only they differ, are this man's religion. And can any man be the better for such a religion, that consists of modes and accidents? It is true, that religion may possibly be so ludicrously disguised and misrepresented, as scarce to be fitly owned for any religion at all. But this cannot be said of most (if of any) of the congregations of England, of either sort. And they that have any thing of charity, or the fear of God about them, will be very wary how, for a misplaced word, or indecent action, or expression, they censure one or another of these two sorts of solemn worshipping assemblies, as having nothing of God or true religion among them.

Thirty-nine articles are given us for the summary of our religion, and of what is thought to appertain to it. Thirty-six contain the substance of it, wherein we agree: three, the additional appendices, about which we have some difference. With such a man, the three weigh more than all the thirty-six. And if his eyes and understanding were usable things with him, he would see the church is a meeting-house, and the meeting-house a church. How remote are these men from the temper of spirit they were directed to be of, that had far greater differences among them than ours, to count themselves all one in Christ Jesus! But throughout the book, such as are of this Christian latitude and benignity of mind towards one another, and not so stingily bigoted to a party as he, are treated with this sort of charity, to be styled painted hypocrites, such as play bo-peep with God Almighty: they that, if such an occasion offer itself to any of them to serve God and their country in a public station, do what the law requires, and which they think they may sinlessly do in order to it, do trespass upon their consciences, and damn their own souls to serve their country: and they that censure them not as he doth, are induced to forbear it only by their gold ring or fine apparel.

And that he would have all such as use that liberty which their consciences and the divine law, as they think, allow them, in order to their serving God and their country, to be disfranchised, and made incapable of doing public service to either, *i. e.* for doing that which as wise men as he count indifferent; and which can therefore make no one either a better or worse man or Christian; and would draw that odium upon the established church, to represent it as if it sought to engross all power to itself, as such, even in civil affairs, upon so insignificant a pretence; than which he could not attempt doing it a greater mischief, or more directly tending to make it intolerable to the prince, nobility, gentry, and to the whole body of the nation itself: no such arts need to be used to expose the clergy to the ill-will of the people, and raise in nobler minds, what some may count, a just and generous disdain of being so enslaved. The nature of man in his lapsed state, is so alienated from God as to have little regard for any sacredness of persons and things, by which only they become related to him.

The church of Rome hath not gained much upon kings and princes

of later years, by affecting to make them dependent on her. And it is not difficult to pre-apprehend, what may at length engage them against her, to her final ruin: *i.e.* to make them hate her, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. In that church this caprice first began in their *dominium temporale in gratiâ fundatum;* and thence by a strangely wide sort of stride or skip, even of a heavenly width, from pole to pole, it was got quite among another sort of men, treading antipodes to the former, in the immodest, rude claim and appropriation to themselves, of the entire privilege and prerogative of the saints' reign. It is the easiest thing in the world, when any sort or party of men have got power into their hands, to saint themselves, and unsaint all other men, at their own pleasure. But do the civil rights of men depend upon such (*i.e.* so easily abusable) pretences? We are saying nothing now of their rights, claimable from God himself, but from one another; and even such rights none could have, *i.e.* that are claimable from their fellow-creatures, or their (*concives*) fellow-members, under any government, but by some original grant, one way or other conveyed from the supreme Ruler, who is the Fountain of all rights.

But hath he ever given Christians (or saints) as such, a right to seize the rights and properties of other men? The notion of the saints' reign, because we find it in the Holy Bible, is not to be torn out, but must have its true sense assigned it. And if there be a time yet to come, wherein it shall have place, it must mean that a more general pouring forth of the Spirit shall introduce a supervening sanctity upon rulers, as well as others; not to give every man a right to rule, (for who should then be ruled?) but to enable and incline them that shall duly have a right, to rule better. And so the kingdom will be the saints', when it is administered by some, and for others, who are so. If God have allowed to men, as men, any rights, *i.e.* that are claimable against other men; and should again give a right to Christians in other men's properties; to what a strait and distress were the rest of the world reduced! Might not any of them say, Since one must be a man before he can be a Christian, what am I to do in this case? Must I unman myself, and lose the rights I have, as such, that I may recover them by being a Christian? I had them as a man before, sufficiently to secure me against the claim of all others. What! but not against Christians? Then are they an unmanned sort of men! And whereas obligations accompany rights, what lawless men are these Christians?

But whereas God hath in great compassion to the world appointed it to be Christianized, he hath with equal wisdom chosen the fittest methods for it; *i.e.* not to commission Christians to divest other men of their all, unless they become Christians; but to let men see Christianity had no design to disturb the world, or disquiet them in their former possessions, though they should not be Christians; but that they might enjoy them with higher advantage, if they be, in order to another world. If God had made Christianity the measure of civil rights to mankind, his sovereignty were not to be disputed; but he never exerts acts of sovereignty, but by the direction of his wisdom. Wheresoever the sound of the Christian name comes, if it carried that avowed principle with it, that Christians, as such, had a right to out all other men of their birth-rights; instead of becoming the religion of the world, nothing could more directly tend to engage and inflame all the world against it,

and make them endeavour its utter extirpation as a thing intolerable to mankind. Nor could they have any so plausible pretence against it besides; having nothing in itself, but what must render it most amiable and self-recommending. Did the Spaniards' methods for Christianizing America recommend the Christian faith to that miserable people? And if God himself would never give such a power, for introducing the very substance of Christian religion itself, how intolerable must it be for any sort, or church of Christians, to claim and use it for the introduction of their own additions to Christianity, as the church of Rome hath notoriously long done! And time will show the event, as common reason doth the tendency of it.

And, sir, though the strain of your discourse shows your no great kindness to this established church, the compliments which here and there you bestow upon it, too broadly show, as if, under a colour of kindness, you would tempt it to aim at loading itself with such a weight of power and greatness, as you may think must finally sink it. Its more real friends, our civil rulers, are more wisely kind to it, and give it no more interest in the civil government than it may more safely bear. They never exact, in order to any one's having a share therein, a total constant conformity to all its rites, as you would have them: and have only designed by the limits they have set, the excluding that sort of men whose known principles make them more incapable of human society than mere pagans. But especially it is not to be let pass, that you, or your author, industriously represent the primitive English puritans (concerning whom it were in some respects well for you, if, as the great author you mention, speaks, your soul were with theirs) as if they were generally of your stingy, narrow spirit. I wonder how you could think to impose upon the world in a matter of so recent memory. This attempt had been more prudently deferred till three or four ages hence; especially if great care had been taken, in the mean time, that all books were burnt, or buried, that give any account of them. How notorious is it, that generally they that continued in their native land, as far the greater number did, looked not upon the church of England as no church; that they wished her more reformed, but in great part kept in her communion; (their principal leaders and the people) taking other opportunities of spiritual improvement as they could; for which they often ran great hazards. In '62 the same spirit and sentiment afresh appeared when most of the considerable ejected London ministers met, and agreed to hold occasional communion with the (now) re-established church: not quitting their own ministry, or declining the exercise of it, as they could have opportunity. And as far as I could by inquiry learn, I can little doubt this to have been the judgment of their fellow-sufferers through the nation, in great part, ever since. How could you have the confidence to represent this as a new thing, and an apostacy from primitive puritanism, that hath so much in it of the spirit of primitive Christianity! such largeness of mind! such reverence of what bears any divine stamp and signature upon it, undefaced! such benignity, even towards them by whom they suffered? How strangely inverted, sir, do things lie in your mind! Must we accordingly transpose the names of virtue and vice? And by how much more illustrious any render themselves by the eminent virtues of pride, fury, self-conceit, censoriousness, to the damning of every body, that in all things do not think, and do,

as they; are these things with you, characters of the most excellent sort of Christians?

If I had seen any thing in your book, that needed, or deserved a particular answer, I should not have balked it. But seeing nothing that looks like reasoning, but what is so idly sophistical that any one of common sense can see through it; such as that, "How can a man dissent and conform at the same time?" when all the world knows, or may, conformity consists of numerous parts; and is it such a miracle for a man to conform in some part, and not in every part? conscientiously to scruple constant, entire conformity, and not scruple some part of it, at some time? If any think such talk needs further answering, let them seek it elsewhere. And for your replying, I shall not prescribe to you; only I can assure you, that thereby, neither you, nor any man else, shall divert me from my much more important, pleasant work; unless I see somewhat that shall make it worth my while. The person you criminate, may yet, notwithstanding what you have said, be in the right, for aught I see. And therefore to any such, whose case this is, or may be, I can only say, that their rule having been consulted with serious diligence, as I hope it hath, and their end a secret between God and them, which, if it be sincere, is enough for them; they have no cause to be discouraged, but go on, and prosper. But, Mr. Prefacer, if your judgment upon the case itself be true; I conceive that truth, accompanied with your temper and spirit, is much worse than their error.

III.

LETTER TO DR. BARLOW, BISHOP OF LINCOLN,

IN ANSWER TO ONE IN WHICH HIS LORDSHIP HAD URGED THE STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAWS AGAINST DISSENTERS: DATED JANUARY, 1684.

RIGHT REVEREND,

As I must confess myself surprised by your late published directions to your clergy of the county of Bedford, so nor will I dissemble, that I did read them with some trouble of mind, which I sincerely profess was more upon your Lordship's account than my own, (who for myself am little concerned) or any other particular person's whatsoever. It was such as it had not been very difficult for me to have concealed in my own breast, or only to have expressed it to God in my prayers for you, (which through his grace I have not altogether omitted to do) if I had not apprehended it not utterly impossible, (as I trust I might, without arrogating unduly to myself) that some or other of those thoughts which I have revolved in my own mind upon this occasion, being only hinted to your Lordship, might appear to your very sagacious judgment, (for which I have had long, and have still a continuing veneration) some way capable of being cultivated by your own mature and second thoughts, so as not to be wholly unuseful to your Lordship.

My own judgment, such as it is, inclines me not to oppose any thing, either, (1.) To the lawfulness of the things themselves which you so much desire should obtain in the practice of the people under your Lordship's pastoral inspection: or, (2.) To the desirable comeliness of an uniformity in the public and solemn worship of God: or, (3.) To the fitness of making laws for the effecting of such uniformity: or, (4.) To the execution of such laws, upon some such persons as may possibly be found among so numerous a people as are under your Lordship's care.

But the things which I humbly conceive are to be deliberated on, are, (1.) Whether all the laws that are in being about matters of that nature, ought now to be executed upon all the persons which any way transgress them, without distinction of either? (2.) Whether it was so well, that your Lordship should advise and press that indistinct execution, which the order (to which the subjoined directions of your Lordship do succenturiate) seems to intend; supposing that designed execution were fit in itself.

I shall not need to speak severally to these heads: your Lordship will sufficiently distinguish what is applicable the one way or the other. But I humbly offer to your Lordship's further consideration, whether it be not a supposable thing that some persons sound in the faith, strictly orthodox in all the articles of it taught by our Lord Jesus or his apostles, resolvedly loyal, and subject to the authority of their governors in church and state, of pious, sober, peaceable, just, charitable dispositions and deportments; may yet (while they agree with your Lordship in that evident principle, both by the law of nature and Scripture, that their prince and inferior rulers ought to be actively obeyed in all lawful things) have a formed, fixed judgment, (for what were to be done in the case of a mere doubt, that hath not arrived to a settled preponderation this way or that, is not hard to determine) of the unlawfulness of some or other of the rites and modes of worship enjoined to be observed in this church? For my own part, though perhaps I should not be found to differ much from your Lordship in most of the things here referred unto, I do yet think that few metaphysical questions are disputed with nicer subtlety, than the matter of the ceremonies has been by archbishop Whitgift, Cartwright, Hooker, Parker, Dr. Burgess, Dr. Ames, Gillespy, Jeanes, Calderwood, Dr. Owen, Baxter, &c. Now, is it impossible that a sincere and sober Christian may, with an honest heart, have so weak intellectuals, as not to be able to understand all the punctilios upon which a right judgment of such a matter may depend? And is it not possible there may be such a thing as a mental, as well as a merely sensitive, antipathy, not vincible by ordinary methods? Is there no difference to be put between things *essential* to our religion, and things confessed *indifferent* on the one hand, and on the other judged *unlawful;* on both hands but *accidental?* (though they that think them *unlawful*, dare not allow themselves a liberty of sinning, even in *accidentals.*) If your Lordship were the *paterfamilias* to a numerous family of children and servants, among whom one or other very dutiful child takes offence, not at the sort of food you have thought fit should be provided, but somewhat in the sauce or way of dressing, which thereupon he forbears; you try all the means which your paternal wisdom and severity thinks fit to overcome that aversion, but in vain;

would you finally famish this child, rather than yield to his inclination in so small a thing?

My Lord, your Lordship well knows the severity of some of those laws which you press for the execution of is such as, being executed, they must infer the utter ruin of them who observe them not, in their temporal concernments; and not that only, but their deprivation of the comfortable advantages appointed by our blessed Lord, for promoting their spiritual and eternal well-being. I cannot but be well persuaded not only of the mere sincerity, but eminent sanctity of divers, upon my own knowledge and experience of them, who would sooner die at a stake, than I or any man can prevail with them, (notwithstanding our rubric, or whatever can be said to facilitate the matter) to kneel before the consecrated elements at the Lord's table. Would your Lordship necessitate such *perdere substantiam propter accidentia?* What if there be considerable numbers of such in your Lordship's vastly numerous flock; will it be comfortable to you, when an account is demanded of your Lordship by the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls concerning them, only to be able to say, "Though, Lord, I did believe the provisions of thine house purchased for them, necessary and highly useful for their salvation, I drove them away as dogs and swine from thy table, and stirred up such other agents as I could influence against them, by whose means I reduced many of them to beggary, ruined many families, banished them into strange countries, where they might (for me) serve other gods; and this not for disobeying any immediate ordinance or law of thine, but because, for fear of offending thee, they did not in every thing comport with my own appointments, or which I was directed to urge and impose upon them?" How well would this practice agree with that apostolical precept, "him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations?" I know not how your Lordship would relieve yourself in this case, but by saying they were not weak, nor conscientious, but wilful and humoursome. But what shall then be said to the subjoined expostulation, "Who art thou that judgest thy brother?—We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." What if they have appeared conscientious, and of a very unblameable conversation in all things else? What if better qualified for Christian communion in all other respects, than thousands you admitted? If you say you know of none such under your charge so severely dealt with, it will be said, why did you use such severity towards them you did not know? or urge and animate them to use it, whom you knew never likely to distinguish? A very noted divine of the church of England, said to me in discourse not very long ago, upon mention of the ceremonies, "Come, come, the Christian church and religion is in a consumption; and it ought to be done as in the case of consumptive persons, shave off the hair to save the life." Another (a dignified person) present, replied, "I doubt not it will be so, in the Philadelphian state." I long thought few had been in the temper of their minds nearer it than your Lordship, and am grieved, not that I so judged, but that I am mistaken; and to see your Lordship the first public example to the rest of your order in such a course. Blessed Lord! how strange is it that so long experience will not let us see, that little and so very disputable matters can never be the terms of union so much to be desired in the Christian church; and that in such a case as ours is, nothing will

satisfy, but the destruction of them whose union upon so nice terms we cannot obtain; and then to call *solitudinem pacem!* But we must, it seems, understand all this rigour your Lordship shows, to proceed from love, and that you are for destroying the dissenters, only to mend their understandings, and because *afflictio dat intellectum.* I hope, indeed, God will sanctify the affliction which you give and procure them, to blessed purposes; and perhaps *periissent nisi periissent:* but for the purposes your Lordship seems to aim at, I wonder what you can expect? Can you by undoing men, change the judgment of their consciences? Or if they should tell you, We do indeed in our consciences judge we shall greatly offend God by complying with your injunctions, but yet to save being undone, we will do it: will this qualify them for your communion? If your Lordship think still, you have judged and advised well in this matter, you have the judgment of our sovereign, upon twelve years' experience, lying against you: you have, as to one of the laws you have executed, the judgment of both houses of parliament against you, who passed a bill (to which perhaps you consented) for taking it away.* You have (as to all of them) the judgment of the last house of commons sitting at Westminster, so far as to the season, then, of executing those laws. It may be your Lordship thinks it now a fitter season: but if you have misjudged, or misdone against your judgment, I pray God to rectify your error by gentler methods, and by less affliction than you have designed to your brethren: and do not for all this doubt, (any more for your part than my own) to meet you there one day, where *Luther* and *Zuinglius* are well agreed. If I did think that would contribute any thing to the honest and truly charitable design of this letter, I should freely and at large tell you my name: and do, however, tell you, I am

A sincere honourer of your Lordship,

And your very faithful, humble servant.

* The Complete History of England, vol. iii. page 393, tells us that the Commons, in 1680, prepared a bill "for exempting his majesty's protestant subjects, dissenting from the Church of England, from the penalties imposed upon the papists, by repealing the Act of 35 Eliz." This bill passed the Commons, and was agreed to by the Lords, and lay ready for his majesty's assent. But when his majesty came to the throne, to pass this among other bills, this was taken from the table, and never heard of after: which no man durst have done, without the king's command, or at least his privity and connivance at it. The loss of this bill was complained of, in the next parliament at Oxford, but without satisfaction or redress.

IV.

TO HIS CONGREGATION AND FRIENDS,

ON SETTING OUT TO TRAVEL WITH LORD WHARTON. (AUGUST, 1685.)

To such in and about London, among whom I have laboured in the work of the gospel.

My most dearly beloved in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, grace, mercy, and peace, be through him multiplied unto you.

That I am at this time at this distance from you, is I am persuaded (upon the experience I have had of your great love and value of my poor labours) not pleasant to you, and I do assure you it is grievous to me, though I murmur not at the wise and holy Providence that hath ordered things thus, in reference to you and me: but it added to my trouble, that I could not so much as bid farewell to persons to whom I had so great endearments, the solemnity whereof you know our circumstances would not admit. Nor could I have opportunity to communicate to you the grounds of my taking this long journey, being under promise while the matter was under consideration, not to speak of it to any one that was not concerned immediately about it: neither could I think that imprudent in itself, where acquaintance was so numerous; silence towards dearest friends in such cases usually being designed for an apology to all others. And after the resolution was taken, my motion depending on another, I had not time for that or any such purposes. And should I yet communicate them, as they lie particularly in my own thoughts, it would lose time that I may more profitably employ, for both you and myself, while I do it not. You will, I may be confident, be more prudent and equal, than to judge of what you do not know: but so much I shall in the general say, that the providence of God gave me the prospect of a present, quiet abode, with some opportunity of being serviceable; (and I hope, as it may prove through his help and blessing, unto you, if I have life and health to finish what I have been much pressed by some of yourselves to go on with;) which opportunity I could not hope to have nearer you, at least without being unreasonably burdensome to some, while I was designing service as much as in me lay to all. It much satisfies me that I have a record above, I am not designing for myself; that He, who knoweth all things, knows I love not this present world, and I covet not an abode in it, (nor have I when it was most friendly to me,) upon any other account, than upon doing some service to Him, and the souls of men. It therefore has been my settled habitual sense and sentiment a long time, to value and desire (with submission to sovereign good pleasure) peace and quiet, with some tolerable health, more than life. Nor have I found any thing more destructive to my health, than confinement to a room a few days in the city air, which was much better and more healthful to me formerly, than since the anger and jealousies of such as I never had a disposition to offend have of later times occasioned persons of my circumstances very seldom to walk the streets.

But my hope is, God will in his good time incline the hearts of rulers more to favour such as cannot be satisfied with the public constitutions in the matters of God's worship, and that are innocent and peaceable in the land; and that my absence from you will be for no long time, it being my design, with dependence upon his gracious providence and pleasure, in whose hands our times are, if I hear of any door open for service with you, to spend the health and strength which God shall vouchsafe me, (and which I find through his mercy much improved since I left you) in his work with and among you. In the mean time, I believe it will not be unacceptable to you, that I offer you some of my thoughts and counsels for your present help; such as are not new to me, nor, as you will find, to yourselves, who are my witnesses, that I have often inculcated such things to you; but they may be useful to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance.

I. I beseech you, more earnestly endeavour to reduce the things you know (and have been by many hands instructed in out of the gospel of our Lord) to practise. Nothing can be more absurd than to content ourselves with only a notional knowledge of practical matters. We should think so in other cases. As if any man should satisfy himself to know the use of food, but famish himself by never eating any, when he hath it at hand: or that he understands the virtues of this or that cordial, but languishes away to death in the neglect of using it, when it might cheer his spirits and save his life. And the neglect of applying the great things of the gospel to the proper uses and purposes of the Christian life, is not more foolish, (only as the concernments they serve for are more important) but much more sinful and provoking to God. For we are to consider whence the revelation comes. They are things which the mouth of the Lord hath spoken; uttered by the breath of the eternal God, as all scriptures are said to be. "God breathed," as that expression may be literally rendered, 2 Tim. iii. 16. And how high a contempt and provocation is it of the great God, so totally to pervert and disappoint the whole design of that revelation he hath made to us, to know the great things contained therein only for knowing-sake, which he hath made known that we might live by them! And O! what holy and pleasant lives should we lead in this world, if the temper and complexion of our souls did answer and correspond to the things we know! The design of preaching has been greatly mistaken, when it has been thought it must still acquaint them who live (and especially who have long lived) under it, with some new thing. Its much greater and more important design is the impressing of known things (but too little considered) upon the hearts of hearers, that they may be delivered up into the mould and form of the doctrine taught them, as Rom. vi. 17: and may so learn Christ as more and more to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, and put off the old man and put on the new. Eph. iv. 20. The digesting our food is what God now eminently calls for.

II. More particularly labour to have your apprehensions of the future state of the unseen world, and eternal things, made more lively and efficacious daily, and that your faith of them may be such as may truly admit to be called the very *substance* and *evidence* of those things. Shall that glorious everlasting state of things be always as a dark shadow with us, or as the images we have of things in a dream, ineffectual and

vanishing, only because we have not seen with our eyes, where God himself hath by his express word made the representations of them to us, who never deceived us, as our own eyes and treacherous senses have done? Why do we not live as just now entering into the eternal state, and as if we now beheld the glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour, when we are as much assured of them as if we beheld them? Why do we not oftener view the representation of the heavens vanishing, the elements melting, the earth flaming, the angels every where dispersed to gather the elect, and them ascending, caught up to meet the Redeemer in the air, ever to be with the Lord? What a trifle will the world be to us then!

III. Let the doctrine of the Redeemer be more studied, and of his mighty undertaking, with the immediate design of it, not merely to satisfy for sin by the sacrifice he once for all made of himself, and so to procure our pardon and justification, without effecting any thing upon us, but to redeem us from all iniquity, to purify us to himself, &c. and to form us after his own holy likeness, and for such purposes to give his Holy Spirit to us. Consider that our Redeemer is mighty, who hath such kind designs upon us; and that as they shall not therefore finally fail of accomplishment, so will they be carried on without interruption, and with discernible success, if we fail not as to what part in subordination to him belongs to us. How cheerfully should the redeemed of the Lord go on in their course under such conduct!

IV. Endeavour your faith may be stronger, more efficacious and practical, concerning the doctrine of Providence, and that the workings and events of it lie all under the management, and in the hand of the Redeemer, who is "head over all things to the church:" that therefore, how grievous and bitter soever be his people's lot and portion at any time, there cannot but be kindness at the bottom; and that not only designing the best end, but taking the fittest way to it. For can love itself be unkind, so as not to design well? or wisdom itself err so, as to take an improper course in order thereto? Hereupon let not your spirits be embittered by the present dispensation of Providence you are under, whereby you are in so great a part deprived of the helps and means of your spiritual advantage, which you like and relish most. And to this purpose consider,—

1. Our wise and merciful Lord, (though perhaps such means might be in some measure useful to us) doth for the present judge, that his rebuking our undue use of them will be more useful; either overvaluing or undervaluing his instruments, turning his ordinances into mere formalities, preferring the means of grace (as they are fitly called) before the end, grace itself.

2. Consider whether there be no disposition of spirit, to treat others as you are treated. The inward temper of our minds and spirits is so much the more narrowly to be inspected, by how much the less there is opportunity to discover it by outward acts. As to such as differ from us about the forms and ceremonies that are now required in the worship of God, would we not be glad if they were as much restrained from using them in their worship, as we from worshipping without them? And do not we think that that would as much grieve them, as our restraint doth us? And why should we suppose that their way should not as much suit their spirits and be as grateful to them, as ours to us?

"But we are in the right way," some will say, "and they in the wrong:" and why cannot any man say the same thing with as much confidence as we? Or do we think there is no difference to be put between controversies about matter of circumstance, and about the essentials of Christianity? Undoubtedly till those that affect the name of the Reformed, and count it more their glory to be called Protestants than to be good Christians, have learned to mingle more justice with their religion, and how better to apply that great advice of our Lord's, "Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do that to them," &c. and till they become studious of excelling other men in substantial goodness, abstractedness from the world, meekness, humility, sobriety, self-denial and charity, and to lay a greater stress hereon than on being of one or other denomination, God's controversy will not cease.

I reckon it much to be considered, and I pray you consider it deeply, that after that great precept, (Eph. iv. 30,) "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God," it immediately follows, (*v.* 31,) "Let all bitterness, and anger, and wrath, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:" plainly implying that the Spirit of God, that Spirit of all love, goodness, sweetness, and benignity, is grieved by nothing more than by our bitterness, wrathfulness, &c. And it appears that the discernible restraint and departure of that blessed Spirit from the church of Christ in so great a measure, for many foregoing generations, in comparison of the plentiful effusion of it in the first age, hath ensued upon the growth of that wrathful contentious spirit which showed itself early in the Gnostic, but much more in the after Arian persecution, which was not in some places less bloody than the Pagan persecution had been before. O the gentleness, kindness, tenderness, and compassionateness of the evangelical truly Christian spirit, as it most eminently appeared in our Lord Jesus Christ himself! And we are told, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. viii. 9. And how easy and pleasant is it to one's own self, to be void of all wrathfulness and vindictive designs or inclinations towards any other man. For my own part, I should not have that peace and consolation in a suffering condition, (as my being so many years under restraint from that pleasant work of pleading with sinners that they might be saved, is the greatest suffering I was liable to in this world) as through the goodness of God I have found, and do find, in being conscious to myself of no other than kind and benign thoughts towards them I have suffered by, and that my heart tells me I desire not the least hurt to them that would do me the greatest; and that I feel within myself an unfeigned love and high estimation of divers, accounting them pious worthy persons, and hoping to meet them in the all-reconciling world, that are yet (through some mistake) too harsh towards us who dissent from them: and in things of this nature I pray that you and I may abound more and more.

But again: as I would not have your spirits embittered, so I would not have your spirits discouraged, or sunk in dejection. "The Lord will not cast off his people, because it hath pleased him to make them his people." 1 Sam. xii. 22. I do not mean those of this or that party, but who fear God and work righteousness, be they of what party soever. As I often think of that saying of an ancient, *(Clem. Alex.)* that he

counted not that philosophy, which was peculiar to this or that sect, but whatsoever of truth was to be found in any of them; so I say of Christianity, it is not that which is appropriate to this or that party, but whatsoever of sincere religion shall be found common to them all. Such will value and love his favour and presence, and shall have it; and he will yet have such a people in the world, and I doubt not more numerous than ever. And as the bitterness of Christians one towards another chased away his Spirit, his Spirit shall vanquish and drive away all that bitterness, and consume our other dross. And as the apostacy long ago foretold, and of so long continuance in the Christian church, hath been begun and continued by constant war against the Spirit of Christ, the restitution and recovery of the church, and the reduction of Christianity to its ancient self, and primitive state, will be by the victory of the Spirit of Christ over that so contrary spirit. Then shall all the enmity, pride, wrathfulness and cruelty, which have rent the church of Christ and made it so little itself, be melted down; and with all their great impurities, besides earthliness, carnality, love of this present world, and prevalence of sensual lusts, be purged more generally away; and his repairing work be done in a way grievous to no one, whereby those that are most absolutely conquered will be most highly pleased; "not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord."

In the mean time let us draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to us. Let us more study the exercising ourselves to godliness, and take heed of turning the religion of our closets into spiritless, uncomfortable formalities. "Their hearts shall live that seek God."

To that blessed, and faithful, and covenant-keeping God I commit you; and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up further, and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified. And as I hope I shall without ceasing remember you in mine, so I hope you will remember too in your prayers,

Your sincerely affectionate,
Though too unprofitable,
Servant in Christ,
JOHN HOWE.

V.

THE CASE OF THE PROTESTANT DISSENTERS

REPRESENTED AND ARGUED.—1689.

They are under one common obligation with the rest of mankind, by the universal law of nature, to worship God in assemblies.

Men of all sorts of religions that have ever obtained in the world, Jews, Pagans, Mahometans, Christians, have in their practice acknowledged this obligation. Nor can it be understood how such a practice

should be so universal, otherwise than from the dictate and impression of the universal law.

Whereas the religion professed in England is that of reformed Christianity, some things are annexed to the allowed public worship which are acknowledged to be no parts thereof, nor in themselves necessary; but which the dissenters judge to be in some part sinful:—

They cannot, therefore, with good conscience towards God, attend wholly and solely upon the public worship which the laws do appoint.

The same laws do strictly forbid their assembling to worship God otherwise.

Which is, in effect, the same thing as if they who made or shall continue such laws, should plainly say, "If you will not consent with us in our superadded rites and modes against your consciences, you shall not worship God; or if you will not accept of our additions to the Christian religion, you shall not be Christians:" and manifestly tends to reduce to paganism a great part of a Christian nation.

They have been wont therefore to meet, however, in distinct assemblies, and to worship God in a way which their consciences could approve; and have many years continued so to do, otherwise than as they have been hindered by violence.

It is therefore upon the whole fit to inquire,—

Q. 1. Whether they are to be blamed for their holding distinct meetings for the worship of God?

For answer to this, it cannot be expected that all the controversies should be here determined, which have been agitated about the lawfulness of each of those things which have been added to the Christian religion and worship, by the present constitution of the church of England.

But supposing they were none of them simply unlawful, while yet the misinformed minds of the dissenters could not judge them lawful, though they have made it much their business to inquire and search; being urged also by severe sufferings, which through a long tract of time they have undergone, not to refuse any means that might tend to their satisfaction; they could have nothing else left them to do, than to meet and worship distinctly as they have.

For they could not but esteem the obligation of the universal, natural, divine law, by which they were bound solemnly to worship God, less questionable than that of a law, which was only positive, topical, and human, requiring such and such additaments to their worship, and prohibiting their worship without them.

The church of England, (as that part affects to be called) distinguished from the rest by those additionals to Christian religion, (pretended to be indifferent, and so confessed unnecessary) hath not only sought to engross to itself the ordinances of divine worship, but all civil power. So that the privileges that belong either to Christian or human society are enclosed, and made peculiar to such as are distinguished by things that in themselves can signify nothing to the making of persons either better Christians or better men.

Q. 2. Whether the laws enjoining such additions to our religion, as the exclusive terms of Christian worship and communion, ought to have been made, when, it is acknowledged on all hands, the things to be added were before not necessary; and when it is known a great number judge

them sinful, and must thereby be restrained from worshipping the true and living God?

Ans. The question to any of common sense answers itself. For it is not put concerning such as dissent from any part of the substance of worship which God hath commanded, but concerning such additions as he never commanded. And there are sufficient tests to distinguish such dissenters from those that deny any substantial part of religion, or assert any thing contrary thereto. Wherefore, to forbid such to worship that God that made them, because they cannot receive your devised additions, is to exclude that which is necessary, for the mere want of that which is unnecessary.

And where is that man that will adventure to stand forth, and avow the hindering of such persons from paying their homage to the God that made them, if we thus expostulate the matter on God's behalf and their own? Will you cut off from God his right in the creatures he hath made? Will you cut off from them the means of their salvation upon these terms? What reply can the matter admit?

It is commonly alleged that great deference is to be paid to the laws, and that we ought to have forborne our assemblies till the public authority recalled the laws against them: and we will say the same thing, when it is well proved that they who made such laws made the world too.

And by whose authority were such laws made? Is there any that is not from God? And hath God given any man authority to make laws against himself, and to deprive him of his just rights from his own creatures?

Nor if the matter be well searched into, could there be so much as a pretence of authority derived for such purposes from the people, whom every one now acknowledges the first receptacle of derived governing power. God can, it is true, lay indisputable obligations, by his known laws, upon every conscience of man, about religion or any thing else. And such as represent any people, can, according to the constitution of the government, make laws for them about the things they entrust them with: but if the people of England be asked, man by man, will they say they did entrust to their representatives their religion and their consciences, to do with them what they please? When it is your own turn to be represented by others, is this part of the trust you commit? What Dr. Sherlock* worthily says concerning a bishop, he might (and particularly after doth) say concerning every other man, "he can be no more represented in a council, than at the day of judgment: every man's soul and conscience must be in his own keeping; and can be represented by no man."

It ought to be considered that Christianity, wherein it superadds to the law of nature, is all matter of revelation. And it is well known that even among pagans, in the settling rites and institutes of religion,† revelation was pretended, at least, upon an implied principle, that in such matters human power could not oblige the people's consciences.

We must be excused, therefore, if we have in our practice expressed

* Vindication of some Protestant Principles, &c. p. 52.

† As by Numa from his Egeria. And their priests, to whom the regulation of such matters was left, were generally believed to be inspired.

less reverence for laws made by no authority received either from God or man.

We are therefore injuriously reflected on, when it is imputed to us, that we have, by the use of our liberty, acknowledged an illegal dispensing power. We have done no other thing herein, than we did when no dispensation was given or pretended, in conscience of duty to Him that gave us our breath: nor did, therefore, practise otherwise, because we thought these laws dispensed with, but because we thought them not laws. Whereupon, little need remains of inquiring further,—

Q. 3. Whether such laws should be continued? Against which, besides what may be collected from that which hath been said, it is to be considered, that what is most principally grievous to us was enacted by that parliament that, as we have too much reason to believe, suffered itself to be dealt with to enslave the nation, in other respects as well as this; and which (to his immortal honour) the noble Earl of Danby procured to be dissolved, as the first step towards our national deliverance.

And let the tenor be considered of that horrid law, by which our *Magna Charta* was torn in pieces; the worst and most infamous of mankind, at our own expense, hired to accuse us; multitudes of perjuries committed, convictions made without a jury, and without any hearing of the persons accused; penalties inflicted, goods rifled, estates seized and embezzled, houses broken up, families disturbed, often at unseasonable hours of the night, without any cause, or shadow of a cause, if only a malicious villain would pretend to suspect a meeting there! No law in any other case like this! As if to worship God without those additions, which were confessed unnecessary, were a greater crime than theft, felony, murder, or treason! Is it for our reputation to posterity, that the memory of such a law should be continued?

And are we not yet awakened, and our eyes opened, enough to see that the making and execution of the laws, by which we have suffered so deeply for many by-past years, was only that protestants might destroy protestants, and the easier work be made for the introduction of popery, that was to destroy the residue?

Nor can any malice deny, or ignorance of observing Englishmen overlook, this plain matter of fact: after the dissolution of that beforementioned parliament, dissenters were much caressed, and endeavoured to be drawn into a subserviency to the court designs, especially in the election of after parliaments. Notwithstanding which, they every where so entirely and unanimously fell in with the sober part of the nation, in the choice of such persons for the three parliaments that next succeeded, (two held at Westminster, and that at Oxford,) as it was known would, and who did most generously, assert the liberties of the nation, and the protestant religion. Which alone (and not our mere dissent from the church of England in matters of religion, wherein Charles II. was sufficiently known to be a prince of great indifferency) drew upon us, soon after the dissolution of the last of those parliaments, that dreadful storm of persecution, that destroyed not a small number of lives in gaols, and ruined multitudes of families.

Let English freemen remember, what they cannot but know, that it

was for our firm adherence to the civil interests of the nation, (not for our different modes of religion from the legal way, though the laws gave that advantage against us, which they did not against others) that we endured the calamities of so many years.

When by the late king some relaxation was given us, what arts and insinuations have been used with us, to draw us into a concurrence to designs tending to the prejudice of the nation! And with how little effect upon the generality of us, it must be great ignorance not to know, and great injustice to deny.

But He that knoweth all things, knoweth that though in such circumstances there was no opportunity for our receiving public and authorized promises, when we were all under the eye of watchful jealousy; yet as great assurances as were possible were given us by some that we hope will now remember it, of a future established security from our former pressures. We were told, over and over, when the excellent Heer Fagel's letter came to be privately communicated from hand to hand, how easily better things would be had for us, than *that* encouraged papists to expect, if ever that happy change should be brought about, which none have now beheld with greater joy than we.

We are loath to injure those who have made us hope for better, by admitting a suspicion that we shall now be disappointed and deceived, (as we have formerly been, and we know by whom) or that we shall suffer from them a religious slavery, for whose sakes we have suffered so grievous things, rather than do the least thing that might tend to the bringing upon them a civil slavery.

We cannot but expect from Englishmen that they be just and true. We hope not to be the only instances whereby the *Anglica fides* and the *Punica* shall be thought all one.

But if we who have constantly desired, and, as we have had opportunity, endeavoured the saving of the nation, must however be ruined, not to greaten (one hair) the wealth and dignity of it, but only to gratify the humour of them who would yet destroy it; we who are competently inured to sufferings, shall through God's mercy be again enabled to endure: but He that sits in the heavens will in his own time judge our cause, and we will wait his pleasure; and we hope suffer all that can be inflicted, rather than betray the cause of reformed Christianity in the world.

But our affairs are in the hands of men of worth and honour, who apprehend how little grateful a name they should leave to posterity, or obtain now with good men of any persuasion, if under a pretence of kindness to us, they should now repeat the arts of ill men, in an ill time. Great minds will think it beneath them to sport themselves with their own cunning in deceiving other men, which were really in the present case too thin not to be seen through, and may be the easy attainment of any man that hath enough of opportunity, and integrity little enough, for such purposes. And it is as much too gross to endeavour to abuse the authority of a nation, by going about to make that stoop to so mean a thing, as to make a show of intending what they resolve to their utmost shall never be.

But some may think, by concessions to us the church of England will be ruined, and a great advantage given to the bringing in of popery.

To which we say, the generality of the dissenters differ from the church of England in no substantials of doctrine and worship, no, nor of government, provided it be so managed, as to attain its true, acknowledged end: the favouring of us therefore will as much ruin the church, as its enlargement and additional strength will signify to its ruin.

And doth not the world know, that wherein we differ from them, we differ from the papists too? And that for the most part, wherein they differ from us, they seem to agree with them?

We acknowledge their strong, brave, and prosperous opposition to popery: but they have opposed it by the things wherein they agree with us. Their differences from us are no more a fence against popery, than an enclosure of straw is against a flame of fire.

But it is wont to be said, we agree not among ourselves, and know not what we would have.

And do all that go under the name of the church of England agree among themselves? We can show more considerable disagreements among them, than any can between the most of us, and a considerable part of them. They all agree, it is true, in conformity: and we all agree in nonconformity. And is not this merely accidental to Christianity and protestantism? And herein is it not well known that the far greater part of reformed Christendom do more agree with us?

An arbitrary line of uniformity in some little accidents, severs a small part of the Christian world from all the rest. How unreasonably is it expected that therefore all the rest must in every thing else agree among themselves? Suppose any imaginary line to cut off a little segment from any part of the terrestrial globe; it is as justly expected that all the rest should be of one mind. If one part of England be tailors, they might as well expect that all the people besides should agree to be of one profession.

Perhaps some imagine it dishonourable to such as have gone before them in the same ecclesiastical stations and dignities, if now any thing should be altered, which their judgment did before approve and think fit.

But we hope that temptation will not prove invincible, *viz.* of so excessive a modesty as to be afraid of seeming wiser, or better natured, or of a more Christian temper than their predecessors.

But the most of us do agree not only with one another, but, in the great things above-mentioned, with the church of England *too:* and in short, that the reproach may cease for ever with those that count it one, they will find with us, when they please to try, a very extensive agreement on the terms of King Charles II.'s Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs, in 1660.

Q. 4. Whether it be reasonable to exclude all that in every thing conform not to the church of England, from any part or share of the civil power?

Ans. The difference or nonconformity of many is so minute, that it would be as reasonable to exclude all whose hair is not of this or that colour. And what if we should make a determination, by the decision this way or that of any other disputed question, that may be of as small concernment to religion? Suppose it be that of *eating blood*, for the decision whereof one way, there is more pretence from God's word, than for any point of the disputed conformity; would it not be a wise con-

stitution, that whosoever thinks it lawful to eat black-pudding, shall be capable of no office? &c.

But we tremble to think of the Exclusive Sacramental Test, brought down as low as to the keeper of an alehouse. Are all fit to approach the sacred table, whom the fear of ruin, or hope of gain may bring thither? We cannot but often remember with horror, what happened three or four years ago: a man that led an ill life, but frequented the church, was observed not to come to the sacrament; and pressed by the officers to come, he yet declined, knowing himself unfit: at length, being threatened and terrified, he came; but said to some present at the time of the solemn action, that he came only to avoid being undone, and took them to witness that what he there received, he took only as common bread and wine, not daring to receive them as the body and blood of Christ. It is amazing, that among Christians so venerable an institution should be prostituted to the serving of so mean purposes, and so foreign to its true end; and that doing it after the manner of the church of England must be the qualification! As if England were another Christendom; or it were a greater thing to conform in every punctilio to the rules of this church, than of Christ himself!

But we would fain know whose is that holy table? Is it the table of this or that party, or the Lord's table? If the Lord's, are not persons to be admitted or excluded upon his terms? Never can there be union or peace in the Christian world till we take down our arbitrary enclosures, and content ourselves with those which our common Lord hath set. If he falls under a curse that alters a man's landmark, to alter God's is not likely to infer a blessing.

The matter is as clear as the light of the sun, that as many persons of excellent worth, sobriety, and godliness, are entirely in the communion of the church of England, so there are too many of a worse character, that are of it too; and divers prudent, pious, and sober-minded persons that are not of it. Let common reason be consulted in this case. Suppose the tables turned, and that the rule were to be made the contrary way, *viz.* that to do this thing, but not by any means after the manner of the church of England, were to be the qualification; and now suppose one of meaner endowments, as a man and a Christian, do what is required, and not in the way of the church of England; and another that is of much better, does the same thing in that way; were it suitable to prudence or justice, that because it is done after the way of the church of England, a fitter man should be reckoned unqualified, and one of less value be taken for qualified, because he does it a different way? Then is all that solid weight of wisdom, diligence, sobriety, and goodness, to be weighed down by a feather.

It must surely be thought the prudence of any government to comprehend as many useful persons as it can, and no more to deprive itself of the service of such, for any thing less considerable than those qualifications are by which they are useful, than a man would tear off from himself the limbs of his body, for a spot on the skin.

And really if in our circumstances we thus narrow our interest, all the rest of the world will say that they who would destroy us do yet find a way to be our instructors, and our common enemies do teach us our politics.

P.S. The names of Mr. Hale, of Eaton College, and of a later most

renowned bishop of the church of England, who asserted this principle, that "if things be imposed under the notion of indifferent which many think sinful, and a schism follow thereupon, the imposers are the schismatics," will be great in England, as long as their writings shall live, and good sense can be understood in them.

VI.

HUMBLE REQUESTS BOTH TO CONFORMISTS AND DISSENTERS,

TOUCHING THEIR TEMPER AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARD EACH OTHER, UPON THE LATELY PASSED INDULGENCE.* 1689 (ON THE PASSING OF THE ACT OF TOLERATION.)

1. THAT we do not over-magnify our differences, or count them greater than they really are. I speak now of the proper differences which the rule itself makes, to which the one sort conforms, and the other conforms not. Remember that there are differences on both parts, *among themselves*, incomparably greater than these by which the one sort differs from the other. There are differences in doctrinal sentiments that are much greater. How unconceivably greater is the difference between good men and bad!—between being a lover of the blessed God, the Lord of heaven and earth, and an enemy!—a real subject of Christ, and of the devil! Have we not reason to apprehend there are of both these, on each side? Let us take heed of having our minds tinctured with a wrong notion of this matter, as if this Indulgence divided England into two Christendoms, or distinguished rather between Christians and Mohammedans, as some men's Cyclopic fancies have an unlucky art to represent things; creating ordinary men and things into monsters and prodigious shapes at their own pleasure. It has been a usual saying on both sides, that they were (in comparison) but little things we differed about, or circumstantial things. Let us not unsay it, or suffer an habit of mind to slide into us, that consists not with it. Though we must not go against a judgment of conscience in the least thing, yet let us not confound the true differences of things; but what are really lesser things, let them go for such.

2. Let us hereupon carefully abstain from judging each other's state Godward, upon these differences: for hereby we shall both contradict our common rule, and ourselves. When men make conscience of small and doubtful things on the one hand and the other, about which they differ, blessed God, how little conscience is made of the plainest and

* Mr. Matthew Henry, in his short Account of the Life of Mr. Richard Stretton, that is subjoined to his Funeral Sermon for him, ascribes this paper to Mr. Stretton, and intimates that he had it from a near relation of his, that he was the author of it: but this I have good reason to believe to have been a mistake. Few that have any taste of styles, can question it to have been Mr. Howe's, when once they have read it. But I can add in this case, that I have had full assurance from Mr. Howe's family, that he was the real author of it.—E. C.

most important rule, not to "judge one another" for such differences! Rom. xiv. 3, 13. Why of all the parts of that holy book, is this chapter only thought no part of God's word! or this precept, so variously enforced in this chapter, and so awfully, (*v.* 10, 11,) "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to me!" Is it a light matter to usurp the throne of Christ, the judgment-seat of God? Yet how common has it been to say, Such an one conforms, he hath nothing of God in him; such an one conforms not, it is not conscience, but humour. God forgive both. Had they blotted Rom. xiv. out of their Bibles? It is plain by the whole series of discourse, that it is the judging of men's states, and that by such small matters of difference, that is the thing here forbidden. Some few things contained in this chapter, as to "receive one another" (as Christians, or such whom God receives) notwithstanding remaining doubts about small matters, and not determining such doubted things in bar to the doubter, (*v.* 1—3;) and not to lay stumbling-blocks in each other's way, (*v.* 13;) not to do the doubted thing with a mind still unsatisfied, (*v.* 5, 23;) not to *censure* either him that does or forbears; not admitting a hard thought of him, or less favourable, than that what such an one *does* he does to the Lord, and what the other *forbears*, he forbears to the Lord. *v.* 6. These few things, I say, put in practice, had taken away all differences, (that we are now considering) or the inconvenience of them, long ago. And we shall still need them as much as ever.

3. Let us not value ourselves upon being of this or that side of the severing line. It is Jewish, yea, pharisaical, to be conceited, and boast ourselves upon externals, and small matters, especially if arbitrarily taken up; and is itself an argument of a light mind, and incomprehensive of true worth. Though I cannot sincerely be of this or that way, but I must think myself in the right, and others in the wrong that differ from me, yet I ought to consider, this is but a small, minute thing, a point compared with the vast orb of knowables, and of things needful, and that ought to be known. Perhaps divers that differ from me, are men of greater and more comprehensive minds, and have been more employed about greater matters; and many, in things of more importance, have much more of valuable and useful knowledge than I. Yea, and since these are not matters of salvation we differ about, so that any on either side dare considerately say, he cannot be saved that is not in these respects of my mind and way; he may have more of sanctifying, savoury knowledge, more of solid goodness, more of grace and real sanctity than I; the course of his thoughts and studies having been by converse and other accidents led more off from these things, and perhaps by a good principle been more deeply engaged about higher matters: for no man's mind is able equally to consider all things fit to be considered; and greater things are of themselves more apt to beget holy and good impressions upon our spirits, than the minuter and more circumstantial things, though relating to religion, can be.

4. Let us not despise one another for our differing in these lesser matters. This is too common, and most natural to that temper that offends against the foregoing caution. Little spirited creatures valuing themselves for small matters, must consequently have them in contempt

that want what they count their own only excellency. He that hath nothing wherein he places worth belonging to him, besides a flaunting peruke and a laced suit, must at all adventures think very meanly of one in a plain garb. Where we are taught not *to judge*, we are forbidden *to despise*, or set at naught one another, upon these little differences.

5. Nor let us wonder that we differ. Unto this we are too apt, *i. e.* to think it strange, (especially upon some arguing of the difference,) that such a man should conform, or such an one not conform. There is some fault in this, but which proceeds from more faulty causes;—pride too often, and an opinion that we understand so well, that a wrong is done us, if our judgment be not made a standard and measure to another man's. And again, ignorance of human nature, or inconsiderateness rather, how mysterious it is, and how little can be known of it; how secret and latent little springs there are that move this engine to our own mind this way or that; and what bars (which perhaps he discerns not himself) may obstruct and shut up towards us another man's. Have we not frequent instances in other common cases, how difficult it is to speak to another man's understanding? Speech is too penurious, not expressive enough. Frequently between men of sense, much more time is taken up in explaining each other's notions, than in proving or disproving them. Nature and our present state have in some respects left us open to God only, and made us inaccessible to one another. Why then should it be strange to me, that I cannot convey my thought into another's mind? It is unchristian to censure, as before, and say, Such an one has not my conscience, therefore he has no conscience at all: and it is also unreasonable and rude to say, Such an one sees not with my eyes, therefore he is stark blind. Besides, the real obscurity of the matter is not enough considered. I am very confident, an impartial and competent judge, upon the view of books later and more ancient upon such subjects, would say, there are few metaphysical questions disputed with more subtlety than the controversies about conformity and nonconformity. Blessed be God that things necessary to the salvation of souls, and that are of *true necessity* even to the peace and order of the Christian church, are in comparison so very plain.

Moreover, there is, besides understanding and judgment, and diverse from that heavenly gift which in the Scriptures is called *grace*, such a thing as gust and relish belonging to the mind of man, and I doubt not, to all men, if they observe themselves; and this is as unaccountable and as various as the relishes and disgusts of sense. This *they* only wonder at, that either understand not themselves, or will consider nobody but themselves. To bring it down to the present case. As to those parts of worship which are of most frequent use in our assemblies, (whether conforming or nonconforming) *prayer, and preaching, and hearing God's word;* our differences about them, cannot but in part arise from the diversity of this principle, both on the one hand and the other. One sort do more savour prayer by a foreknown form; another that which hath more of surprise, by a grateful variety of unexpected expressions. And it can neither be universally said, it is a better judgment, or more grace, that determines men the one way or the other; but somewhat in the temper of their minds distinct from both, which I know not how better to express than by *mental taste*, the acts whereof (as the objects are suitable or unsuitable) are relishing or disrelishing,

liking or disliking. And this hath no more of mystery in it, than that there is such a thing belonging to our natures as complacency or displacency in reference to the objects of the mind. And this, in the kind of it, is as common to men as human nature; but as much diversified in individuals as men's other inclinations are, that are most fixed, and least apt to admit of change. Now, in the mentioned case, men cannot be universally determined either way by their having better judgment; for no sober man can be so little modest, as not to acknowledge that there are some of each sentiment, that are less judicious than some that are of the contrary sentiment in this thing. And to say that to be more determined in this way or that, is the certain sign or effect of a greater measure of grace and sanctity, were a great violation both of modesty and charity. I have not met with any that have appeared to live in more entire communion with God, in higher admiration of him, in a pleasanter sense of his love, or in a more joyful expectation of eternal life, than some that have been wont with great delight publicly to worship God in the use of our Common Prayer; and others I have known, as highly excelling in the same respects, that could by no means relish it, but have always counted it insipid and nauseous. The like may be said of relishing or disrelishing sermons preached in a digested set of words, or with a more flowing freedom of speech. It were endless and odious to vie either better judgments, or more pious inclinations, that should universally determine men either the one way or the other in these matters. And we are no more to wonder at these peculiarities in the temper of men's minds, than at their different tastes of meats and drinks; much less to fall out with them, that their minds and notions are not just formed as ours are: for we should remember, they no more differ from us, than we do from them; and if we think we have the clearer light, it is like they also think they have clearer. And it is in vain to say, who shall be judge? For every man will at length judge of his own notions for himself, and cannot help it: for no man's judgment, (or relish of things, which influences his judgment, though he know it not) is at the command of his will; and much less of another man's. And therefore,—

6. Let us not be offended mutually with one another, for our different choice of this or that way, wherein we find most of real advantage and edification. Our greatest concern in this world, and which is common to us all, is the bettering of our spirits, and preparing them for a better world. Let no man be displeased, (especially of those who agree in all the substantials of the same holy religion) that another uses the same liberty, in choosing the way most conducing in his experience to his great end, that he himself also uses; expecting to do it without another man's offence.

7. But above all, let us with sincere minds more earnestly endeavour the promoting the interest of religion itself, of true reformed Christianity, than of this or that party. Let us long to see the religion of Christians become simple, primitive, agreeable to its lovely original state, and again *itself;* and each in our own stations contribute thereto all that we are able, labouring that the internal principle of it may live and flourish in our own souls, and be to our utmost diffused and spread unto other men's. And for its externals, as the ducture of our rule will guide us, so gradually bend towards one common course, that there may at length cease to be any divided parties at all.

In the mean time, while there are, let it be remembered that the difference lies among Christians and protestants, not between such and pagans. Let us therefore carry it accordingly towards each other; and consider our assemblies are all Christian and protestant assemblies, differing in their administrations, for the most part, not in the things prayed for or deprecated, or taught, but in certain modes of expression: and differing really, and in the substance of things, less by mere conformity or nonconformity to the public rule of the law, than many of them that are under it do from one another, and than divers that are not under it. For instance, go into one congregation that is a conforming one, and you have the public prayers read in the desk, and afterwards a form of prayer perhaps used by the preacher in the pulpit, of his own composure, before he begins his sermon. Go into another congregation, and prayer is performed without either sort of form; and perhaps the difference in this is not so great. It may be the conformist uses no preconceived form of his own, and the nonconformist may. Both instruct the people out of the same holy book of God's word. But now suppose one of the former sort reads the public prayers gravely, with the appearance of great reverence, fervency, and pious devotion; and one of the latter sort that uses them not, does however pray for the same things, with judgment, and with like gravity and affection, and they both instruct their hearers fitly and profitably; nothing is more evident than that the worship in these two assemblies doth much less considerably differ to a pious and judicious mind, than if in the latter the prayers were also read, but carelessly, sleepily, or scenically, flauntingly, and with manifest irreverence, and the sermon like the rest; or than if in the former, all the performance were inept, rude, or very offensively drowsy or sluggish.

Now let us show ourselves men, and manly Christians, not swayed by trifles and little things, as children, by this or that dress or mode, or form of our religion, which may perhaps please some the more for its real indecency: but know, that if we continue picquering about forms, the life be lost, and we come to bear the character of that church, "thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead," we may ere long (after all the wonders God hath wrought for us) expect to hear of our candlesticks being removed, and that our sun shall go down at noon-day.

The true serious spirit and power of religion and godliness, will act no man against his conscience, or his rule understood, but will oblige him in all acts of worship, (as well as of his whole conversation) to keep close to gospel prescription, so far as he can discern it. And that he will find requires, that in subordination to the divine glory, he seriously design the working out of the salvation of his own soul, and take that course in order thereto, put himself under such a ministry, and such a way of using God's ordinances, as he finds most profitable and conducing to that great end, and that doth his soul most real good. If you are religious, or of this or that mode or way of religion, to serve a carnal design for yourself or your party, not to save your soul; you commit the most detestable sacrilege, and alienate the most sacred thing in the world, *religion*, from its true end; which will not only lose that end, but infer a heavy vengeance. Yea, and it is too possible to transgress dangerously, by preferring that which is less, though never so confidently

thought to be divine, before that which is greater, or separately from its true end. You greatly prevaricate, if you are more zealously intent to promote independency than Christianity, presbytery than Christianity, prelacy than Christianity, as any of these are the interest of a party, and not considered in subserviency to the Christian interest, nor designed for promoting the edification and salvation of your own soul. But that being your design, living religion will keep your eye upon your end, and make you steady and constantly true to that, and to your rule, without which you can never hope to reach your end.

Now, hereupon, such as conform to the public establishment, and they that dissent from it, may differ from each other upon a twofold account: either, (1) as judging the contrary way to be simply unlawful; or, (2) as judging it to be only less edifying. It is not the business of this paper to discuss who herein judge aright, and who wrong: but supposing their judgment to remain as it is, (which they themselves, however, should examine, and if it be wrong, rectify;) I shall say somewhat to each of these cases.

To the former, while your judgment continues as it is, it is true you cannot join in worship with the contrary minded. But nothing forbids but you can be kind, conversable, courteous towards them; and your common Christian profession (besides the rules of humanity) obliges you so to be: yea, and even to converse with them, as occasion invites, more intimately as Christians, the visible marks of serious Christianity appearing in them.

To the latter sort it is acknowledged, you cannot constantly join in worship with those of the contrary way, because you ought ordinarily to worship God in that way which you judge to be best, and most agreeable to the divine rule, (though you are not obliged utterly to abandon any for its imperfections or corruptions, that is not corrupt in the very essentials;) and you ought most frequently to attend on that which you find to be most edifying to your own soul; as that should be your more ordinary diet that best agrees with you. That way, therefore, you must most constantly adhere to, which is most grateful and savoury to you; because you cannot so much edify by what you less relish. But your judgment and latitude will well allow you sometimes to frequent the assemblages with which you hold not constant communion. And if it will allow, it will also direct you thereto for a valuable end; as that you may signify you ordinarily decline them not as no Christians, or their worship as no worship, but as more defective, or less edifying; and that you may maintain love, and both express and beget a disposition to nearer union. And if our rulers shall judge such intercourses conducing to so desirable an end, they may perhaps in due time think it reasonable to put things into that state, that ministers of both sorts may be capable of inviting one another occasionally, to the brotherly offices of mutual assistance in each other's congregations. For which, and all things that tend to make us a happy people, we must wait upon Him in whose hands their hearts are.

VII.

A LETTER TO A PERSON OF HONOUR,

PARTLY REPRESENTING THE RISE OF OCCASIONAL CONFORMITY, AND PARTLY THE SENSE OF THE PRESENT NONCONFORMISTS, ABOUT THEIR YET CONTINUING DIFFERENCES FROM THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH, (FOUND AMONG MR. HOWE'S PAPERS AFTER HIS DEATH; BUT DRAWN UP ABOUT 1702.)

My Lord,

It is well known to such as have understood the state of religion in this kingdom since the beginning of the Reformation, that there have been very different sentiments about the degrees of that Reformation itself. Some have judged the church with us so insufficiently reformed, as to want as yet the very being of a true Christian church; and wherewith they therefore thought it unlawful to have any communion at all. Of whom many thereupon, in the several successive reigns, withdrew themselves into foreign parts, for the enjoyment of the liberty of such worship as they judged more agreeable to the word of God.

There have been also no inconsiderable numbers, in former and later times, that though not entirely satisfied with our Reformation, were less severe in their judgment concerning the constitution and practice of the established Church; *i. e.* did not judge its Reformation so defective, that they might not communicate at all with it; nor so complete, but that they ought to covet a communion more strictly agreeable to the Holy Scripture; and accordingly apprehended themselves to lie under a twofold obligation of conscience in reference hereto.

1. Not by any means totally to cut themselves off on the one hand from the communion of the established Church, in which they found greater and more momentous things to be approved of and embraced with great reverence and complacency, (*viz.* all the true noble essentials of Christian religion, not subverted as among the Romanists by any contrary doctrines or practices) than could be pretended to remain the matter of their disapprobation and dislike.

2. Nor on the other hand to decline other communion, which to the judgment of their conscience appeared, in some considerable circumstances, more agreeable to the Christian rule, and to their experience more conducing to their spiritual advantage and edification.

Which latter judgment of theirs, (whether itself justifiable or no, we are not now considering) hath been with many so fixed and inflexible, that in several successive reigns great numbers of such persons, who we had no reason to apprehend had any thought totally to abandon the established Church, yet thought themselves obliged besides, to seek and procure opportunities for such other communions, even with extreme peril not only to their estates and liberties, but to their very lives themselves.

They could not therefore but think both these sorts of communions lawful, *viz.* whereto they might adjoin, but not confine themselves.

And though to that former sort of communion there hath, for many

years by past, been superadded the accidental consideration of a place or office attainable hereby; no man can allow himself to think that what he before counted lawful, is by this supervening consideration become unlawful: especially if the office were such, as was in no manner of way to be an emolument, but rather an occasion of greater expense to the undertaker of it: *i. e.* only enabled him to serve God, the government and his country, being regularly called hereto, in the condition of a justice of peace, or otherwise. In which capacity it is notorious that divers persons of eminent note of this persuasion, (and some in higher stations) have, within the space of forty years past and upwards, been serviceable to the public in divers parts of the nation.

It is not indeed to be thought that the judgment and practice of such men can be throughout approved by our reverend fathers and brethren of the established Church, as neither can we pretend it to be so universally by ourselves. But we are remote from any the least suspicion that persons of so excellent worth and Christian temper, as now preside over the established Church, can suffer themselves to judge or censure men of this sentiment, as being, for this single reason, men of hypocritical and insincere minds; but that they will rather think it possible their understandings may be imposed upon, so as this may be the judgment, in the whole, of a sincere though misinformed conscience.

For when they apprehend this church, having all the essential parts of Christian religion, has not, by adding some much disputed things, that are not pretended to be any parts thereof, (but that are become as necessary to communion with it, as any the most essential part) thereby unchurched itself, but that they may hold communion with it; yet they do not see that they ought to appropriate their communion to it, so as to refuse all other communion, where the same essentials of Christian religion are to be found, without those additions which really belong not to it; they are apt to think such sentiments of theirs not to be altogether destitute of some plausible ground.

However, among those that are not entirely, in every punctilio, of this church, it hath not any so firm friends, or that are so nearly united in judgment and affection with it, as men of this sentiment.

We, for our parts, (who, because in some things we conform not, are called Nonconformists—whereas no man conforms in every thing) are not allowed to be counted members of this Church by those that take denominations, not from the intimate essentials of things, (as sameness of doctrine, and the institutions of Christian worship) but from loose and very separable accidents; yet, thanks be to God, we are not so stupid as not to apprehend we are under stricter and much more sacred obligations, than can be carried under the sound of a name, to adhere to those our reverend fathers and brethren of the established church, who are most united among themselves in duty to God and our Redeemer, in loyalty to our sovereign, and in fidelity to the Protestant religion, as with whom in this dubious state of things we are to run all hazards, and to live and die together. Whether they can have the same assurance, both from interest and inclination of mind, concerning all that are of the same external denomination with themselves, they need not us to advise with.

We have our yet depending lesser differences, about which we have (notwithstanding whatsoever provocation) been generally, and for the

most part, silent; and see not, in reference to them, what can farther remain, than that we, for our part, do consider that all minds are not turned the same way; that such from whom we dissent, no farther differ from us, than we do from them; and we are therefore no more to wonder at them, than ourselves.

And we cannot disallow ourselves to hope, that our reverend fathers and brethren will conceive of us as humbly dissenting from them, without diminution of that great reverence which their real worth claims from us, and without arrogating any thing unduly to ourselves on that account. For though we cannot avoid thinking we are in the right, in those particular things wherein we differ, yet at the same time we know ourselves to be far excelled by them in much greater and more important things.

My honoured Lord,
Your Lordship's
Most obedient humble Servant,
J. H.

[But after this, says Calamy, some gave themselves a strange liberty of inveighing against this practice of *occasional communion*, as irrational, unchristian, and altogether unaccountable, and self-condemning. And it at length became a question, whether they that could at all and in any case worship God with the Church of England, should not be obliged to do it for a constancy, or else be incapacitated from holding any place either of profit or trust? And when things were come to this pass, and the Occasional Bill was first brought into the House of Commons in 1702, Mr. Howe committed his thoughts to writing in the following paper:—]

A CASE.

Two sorts of Christian assemblies are wont to meet, severally, for the worship of God, which both hold all the same articles of doctrine taught by Christ or his apostles; and use the same institutions of worship appointed by them: only they differ in this, that the one sort use also some rites not so appointed, which the other use not.

Two gentlemen, Sir T—— and Sir J——, are of equal estates: but Sir T—— lives not so regularly, more seldom comes to the worship of God in any Christian assembly; yet when he doth, resorts only to one of the former sort.

Sir J—— is a sober virtuous person, of approved piety, prudence, justice, fortitude, and who publicly worships God sometimes in the one sort of assembly, and sometimes in the other.

The question is not, whether some lewd and vicious persons may not frequent both sorts of assemblies, nor whether some sober and pious persons may not frequent those of the former sort only; but whether Sir J—— ought to be rendered incapable of serving the government, (to which he hath constantly expressed himself well affected) in any station civil, or military, for this single reason, because he sometimes worships God in assemblies of the latter sort; (whether it be his infelicity, ill-humour,

or mistake, whereof yet he is not convinced:) while Sir T—— (who is as little convinced of his ill life) is left capable? At least, if the one be incapable, should not both?

But if the question be determined the other way, monstrous! How will that determination of an English parliament stand in the annals of future time? How will wiser posterity blush they had such progenitors! For can it be supposed a nation will be always drunk? Or if ever it be sober, will it not be amazed there ever was a time when a few ceremonies, of which the best thing that ever was said was that they were indifferent, have enough in them to outweigh all religion, all morality, all intellectual endowments, natural or acquired, which may happen in some instances to be on the wrong side, (as it must now be reckoned,) when on the other is the height of profaneness, and scorn at religion; the depth of debauchery and brutality, with half a wit, hanging between sense and nonsense: only to cast the balance the more creditable way, there is the skill to make a leg, to dance to a fiddle, nimbly to change gestures, and give a loud response, which contain the answer for the villainies of an impure life!

If those little pieces of church-modishness have so much in them of real value in all these, are they not well enough paid by the whole church revenues of England, without stigmatizing every body that so much admires them not; and while divers of real worth live upon charity, some with difficulty getting, others (educated to modesty) with greater difficulty begging, their bread?

But do those who are not contented to engross all the legal emoluments think there is no God in heaven, that knows their large promises, at the beginning of this Revolution, of great abatements in their church constitution; when now, without abating one hair, they must have all conformed to it in every punctilio, or be (as much as in them is) made infamous, and the scorn of the nation?

LETTERS.

TO LADY RUSSELL, ON THE EXECUTION OF LORD RUSSELL.

MADAM,

IT can avail you nothing, to let your honour know from what hand this paper comes; and my own design in it is abundantly answered, if what it contains proves useful to you. Your affliction hath been great, unspeakably beyond what it is in my power or design to represent; and your supports (in the paroxysm of your affliction) have been very extraordinary; and such as wherein all that have observed or heard, could not but acknowledge a divine hand.

But your affliction was not limited and enclosed within the limits of one black day, nor is like those more common ones, the sense whereof abates and wears off by time; but is continued, and probably more felt, as time runs on: which therefore makes you need continued help from Heaven every day.

Yet there is here a great difference between what expectations we may have of divine assistance, in the beginning, or first violence, of some great affliction; and in the continued course of it afterwards. At first we are apt to be astonished, a consternation seizes our thinking faculty, especially as to that exercise of it, whereby it should minister to our relief. In this case the merciful God doth more extraordinarily assist such as sincerely trust and resign themselves to him; unto these, as his more peculiar favourites, his sustaining influences are more immediate and more efficacious, so as even (in the present exigency) to prevent and supersede any endeavour of theirs, whereof they are, then, less capable. And of the largeness and bounty of his goodness, in such a case, few have had greater experience than your Ladyship; which was eminently seen in that magnanimity, that composure and presentness of mind, much admired by your friends, and no doubt by the special favour of Heaven afforded you in the needful season: so that while that amazing calamity was approaching, and stood in nearer view, nothing that was fit, or wise, or great, was omitted; nothing indecent done. Which is not now said, God knows, to flatter your Ladyship, (whereof the progress will farther vindicate me:) for I ascribe it to God, as I trust your Ladyship, with unfeigned gratitude, will also do. And I mention it, as that whereby you are under obligation to endeavour your continued temper and deportment may be agreeable to such beginnings.

For now, (which is the other thing whereof a distinct observation

ought to be had) in the continuance and settled state of the affliction, when the fury of the first assault is over, and we have had leisure to recollect ourselves, and recover our dissipated spirits, though we are then more sensible of pain and smart, yet also the power of using our own thoughts is restored. And being so, although we are too apt to use them to our greater hurt and prejudice, we are really put again into a capacity of using them to our advantage, which our good God doth in much wisdom and righteousness require we should do. Whereupon we are to expect his continual assistance for our support under continued affliction, in the way of concurrence and co-operation with our due use of our own thoughts, aptly chosen, as much as in us is, and designed by ourselves, for our own comfort and support.

Now, as for thoughts suitable to your honour's case, I have reason to be conscious that what I shall write can make but little accession, I will not say to a closet, but to a mind so well furnished as you are owner of: yet I know it is remote from you to slight a well-intended offer and essay, that really proceeds only from a very compassionate sense of your sorrows, and unfeigned desire to contribute something (if the Father of mercies, and the God of all comforts and consolations, will please to favour the endeavour) to your relief.

And the thoughts which I shall most humbly offer, will have that first and more immediate design, but to persuade your making use of your own; that is, that you would please to turn and apply them to subjects more apt to serve this purpose, the moderating your own grief, and the attaining an habitual well-tempered cheerfulness, for your remaining time in this world. For I consider how incident it is to the afflicted, to indulge to themselves an unlimited liberty in their sorrows, to give themselves up to them, to make them meat and drink, to justify them in all their excesses, as that (otherwise) good and holy man of God did his anger, and say, "they do well to be sorrowful even to the death," and (as another) to "refuse to be comforted." And I also consider that our own thoughts must, and will, always be the immediate ministers either of our trouble or comfort, though as to the latter, God only is the supreme author; and we altogether insufficient to think any thing that good is, as of ourselves. It is God that comforts those that are cast down, but by our own thoughts employed to that purpose, not without them.

I do not doubt, Madam, but if you once fixedly apprehend that there is sin in an over-abounding sorrow, you will soon endeavour its restraint: for I cannot think you would more earnestly set yourself to avoid any thing, than what you apprehend will offend God, especially the doing that in a continued course. Is there any time when joy in God is a duty? It is very plain the sorrow that excludes it is a sin. How the former may appear to be a duty, and how far, let it be considered.

It is not to be doubted but that He that made us hath a right to rule us; he that gave us being, to give us law:—nor, again, that the Divine government reaches our minds, and that they are the prime and first seat of his empire. "His kingdom is within us." We are not then to exercise our thoughts, desires, love, joy, or sorrow, according to our own will, but his; not as we please or find ourselves inclined, but suitably to his precepts and purposes, his rules and ends.

It is evident that, withal, the earthly state is mixed, intermediate between the perfect felicity of heaven, and the total misery of hell; and farther, that the temper of our spirits ought to have in it a mixture of joy and sorrow, proportionable to our state, or what there is in it of the just occasions or causes of both.

Where Christianity obtains, and the gospel of our Saviour is preached, there is much greater cause of joy than elsewhere. The visible aspect of it imports a design to form men's minds to gladness, inasmuch as, wheresoever it comes, it proclaims peace to the world, and represents the offended Majesty of heaven willing to be reconciled to his offending creatures on earth. So the angel prefaced the gospel, when our Lord was born into the world, (Luke ii.) "I tell you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." And so the multitude of accompanying angels sum it up; "Glory be to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will towards men."

To them that truly receive the gospel, and with whom it hath its effect, the cause of rejoicing riseth much higher. For if the offer and hope of reconciliation be a just ground of joy, how much more actual agreement with God upon the terms of the gospel, and reconciliation itself! "We rejoice in God through Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement." Rom. v. 11. To such there are express precepts given to "rejoice in the Lord always." Phil. iv. 4. And lest that should be thought to have been spoken hastily, and that it might have its full weight, that great apostle immediately adds, "and again I say to you, rejoice." And elsewhere, "rejoice evermore." 1 Thess. v. 16.

Hence, therefore, the genuine right temper and frame of a truly Christian mind and spirit may be evidently concluded to be this, (for such precepts do not signify nothing, nor can they be understood to signify less,) *viz.* an habitual joyfulness, prevailing over all the temporary occasions of sorrow that occur to them. For none can be thought of that can preponderate, or be equal to the just and great causes of their joy. This is the true frame, model, and constitution of the kingdom of God, which ought to have place in us; herein it consists, *viz.* "in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. xiv. 17.

Nor is this a theory only, or the idea and notion of an excellent temper of spirit, which we may contemplate indeed, but can never attain to. For we find it also to have been the attainment and usual temper of Christians heretofore, that "being justified by faith, and having peace with God, they have rejoiced in hope of the glory of God," unto that degree, as even to "glory in their tribulations also." Rom. v. 1—3. And that, in the confidence they should "be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation," they have hereupon "greatly rejoiced," though with some mixture of heaviness (whereof there was need) from their manifold trials. But that their joy did surmount and prevail over their heaviness is manifest; for this is spoken of with much diminution, whereas they are said to "rejoice greatly," and "with a joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Pet. i. 5, 6, 8.

Yea, and such care hath the great God taken for the preserving of this temper of spirit among his people more anciently, that even their sorrow for sin itself (the most justifiable of all other) hath had restraints

put upon it, lest it should too long exclude or intermit the exercise of this joy. For when a great assembly of them were universally in tears, "upon hearing the law read, and the sense given," they were forbidden to weep or mourn, or be sorry, because "the joy of the Lord was their strength." Nehem. viii. 8—10. That most just sorrow had been unjust, had it been continued, so as to exclude the seasonable turn and alternation of this joy. For even such sorrow itself is not required, or necessary, for itself. It is remote from the goodness and benignity of God's ever-blessed nature, to take pleasure in the sorrows of his people, as they are such, or that they should sorrow for sorrow's sake; but only as a means and preparative to their following joy. And nothing can be more unreasonable, than that the means should exclude the end, or be used against the purpose they should serve.

It is, then, upon the whole most manifest, that no temporary affliction whatsoever, upon one who stands in special relation to God, as a reconciled (and which is consequent, an adopted) person, though attended with the most aggravating circumstances, can justify such a sorrow (so deep or so continued) as shall prevail against, and shut out a religious, holy joy, or hinder it from being the prevailing principle in such a one. What can make that sorrow allowable, or innocent, (what event of Providence, that can, whatever it is, be no other than an accident to our Christian state,) that shall resist the most natural design and end of Christianity itself; that shall deprave and debase the truly Christian temper, and disobey and violate most express Christian precepts; subvert the constitution of Christ's kingdom among men; and turn this earth (the place of God's treaty with the inhabitants of it in order to their reconciliation to himself, and to the reconciled the portal and gate of heaven, yea, and where the state of the very worst and most miserable has some mixture of good in it, that makes the evil of it less than that of hell) into a mere hell to themselves, of sorrow without mixture, and wherein shall be nothing but weeping and wailing.

The cause of your sorrow, Madam, is exceeding great. The causes of your joy are inexpressibly greater. You have infinitely more left than you have lost. Doth it need to be disputed whether God be better and greater than man? or more to be valued, loved, and delighted in? and whether an eternal relation be more considerable than a temporary one? Was it not your constant sense in your best outward state, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, O God, and whom can I desire on earth, in comparison of thee?" Ps. lxxiii. 25. Herein the state of your Ladyship's case is still the same (if you cannot rather with greater clearness, and with less hesitation, pronounce those latter words.) The principal causes of your joy are immutable, such as no supervening thing can alter. You have lost a most pleasant, delectable, earthly relative. Doth the blessed God hereby cease to be the best and most excellent good? Is his nature changed? his everlasting covenant reversed and annulled, which is "ordered in all things and sure," and is to be "all your salvation and all your desire," whether he make your house on earth to grow or not to grow? 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. That sorrow which exceeds the proportion of its cause, compared with the remaining true and real causes of rejoicing, is in that excess causeless; *i.e.* that excess of it wants a cause, such as can justify or afford defence unto it.

We are required, in reference to our nearest relations in this world,

(when we lose them) "to weep as if we wept not," as well as (when we enjoy them) to "rejoice as if we rejoiced not," because our time here is short, and the fashion of this world passeth away. 1 Cor. vii. 29—31. We are finite beings, and so are they. Our passions in reference to them must not be infinite, and without limit, or be limited only by the limited capacity of our nature, so as to work to the utmost extent of that, as the fire burns, and the winds blow as much as they can: but they are to be limited by the power, design, and endeavour of our reason and grace, (not only by the mere impotency of our nature) in reference to all created objects. Whereas, in reference to the infinite, uncreated Good, towards which there is no danger or possibility of exceeding in our affection, we are never to design to ourselves any limits at all; for that would suppose we had loved God enough, or as much as he deserved, which were not only to limit ourselves, but him too; and were a constructive denial of his infinite, immense goodness, and consequently, of his very Godhead. Of so great concernment it is to us, that in the liberty we give our affections, we observe the just difference which ought to be in their exercise towards God, and towards creatures.

It is also to be considered, that the great God is pleased so to condescend, as himself to bear the name, and sustain the capacity, of our nearest earthly relations; which implies that what they were to us, in this or that kind, he will be, in a transcendent and far more noble kind. I doubt not but your Ladyship hath good right to apply to yourself those words of the prophet, (Isa. lvi. 5,) "Thy Maker is thy husband," &c. Whereupon, as he infinitely transcends all that is delectable in the most excellent earthly relation, it ought to be endeavoured, that the affection placed on him should proportionably excel. I cannot think any person in the world would be a more severe or impartial judge of a criminal affection than your Ladyship: or that it would look worse unto any eye, if any one should so deeply take to heart the death of an unrelated person, as never to take pleasure more, in the life, presence, and conversation of one most nearly related. And you do well know that such a height (or that supremacy) of affection as is due to the ever-blessed God, cannot without great injury be placed any where else. As we are to have none other God before him; so him alone we are to love with all our heart, and soul, and might and mind.

And it ought farther to be remembered, that whatsoever interest we have or had in any the nearest relative on earth, his interest who made both is far superior. He made us and all things primarily for himself, to serve great and important ends of his own: so that our satisfaction in any creature, is but secondary and collateral to the principal design of its creation.

Which consideration would prevent a practical error and mistake that is too usual with pious persons, afflicted with the loss of any near relation, that they think the chief intention of such a Providence is their punishment. And hereupon they are apt to justify the utmost excesses of their sorrow upon such an occasion, accounting they can never be sensible enough of the Divine displeasure appearing in it; and make it their whole business, (or employ their time and thoughts beyond a due proportion) to find out and fasten upon some particular

sin of theirs, which they may judge God was offended with them for, and designed now to punish upon them. It is indeed the part of filial ingenuity, deeply to apprehend the displeasure of our Father, and an argument of great sincerity to be very inquisitive after any sin for which we may suppose him displeased with us, and apt to charge ourselves severely with it, though perhaps, upon utmost inquiry, there is nothing particularly to be reflected on, other than common infirmity incident to the best, (and it is well when at length we can make that judgment, because there really is no more, not for that we did not inquire) and perhaps also God intended no more in such a dispensation, (as to what concerned us in it) than only, in the general, to take off our minds and hearts more from this world, and draw them more entirely to himself. For if we were never so innocent, must therefore such a relative of ours have been immortal? But the error in practice as to this case, lies here; not that our thoughts are *much* exercised this way, but *too much*. We ought to consider in every case, principally, that which is principal. God did not create this or that excellent person, and place him for a while in the world, principally to please us; nor therefore doth he take him away, principally to displease or punish us; but for much nobler and greater ends which he hath proposed to himself concerning him. Nor are we to reckon ourselves so little interested in the great and sovereign Lord of all, whom we have taken to be our God, and to whom we have absolutely resigned and devoted ourselves, as not to be obliged to consider and satisfy ourselves, in his pleasure, purposes, and ends, more than our own, apart from his.

Such as he hath pardoned, accepted, and prepared for himself, are to serve and glorify him in a higher and more excellent capacity, than they ever could in this wretched world of ours, and wherein they have themselves the highest satisfaction. When the blessed God is pleased in having attained and accomplished the end and intendments of his own boundless love, (too great to be satisfied with the conferring of only temporary favours in this imperfect state) and they are pleased in partaking the full effects of that love; who are we, that we should be displeased? or that we should oppose our satisfaction to that of the glorious God, and his glorified creature?

Therefore, Madam, whereas you cannot avoid to think much on this subject, and to have the removal of that incomparable person for a great theme of your thoughts, I do only propose most humbly to your honour, that you would not confine them to the sadder and darker part of that theme. It hath also a bright side; and it equally belongs to it, to consider whither he is gone and to whom, as whence and from whom. Let, I beseech you, your mind be more exercised in contemplating the glories of that state your blessed consort is translated unto, which will mingle pleasure and sweetness with the bitterness of your afflicting loss, by giving you a daily intellectual participation (through the exercise of faith and hope) in his enjoyments. He cannot descend to share with you in your sorrows; you may thus every day ascend, and partake with him in his joys. He is a pleasant subject to consider. A prepared spirit made meet for an inheritance with them that are sanctified and with the saints in light, now entered into a state so connatural, and wherein it finds every thing most agreeable to itself! How highly grateful is it to be united with the true centre, and

come home to the Father of spirits! To consider how pleasant a welcome, how joyful an entertainment he hath met with above! How delighted an associate he is with the "general assembly, the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect!" How joyful an homage he continually pays to the throne of the celestial King!

Will your Ladyship think that a hard saying of our departing Lord to his mournful disciples, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice that I said, I go to the Father; for my Father is greater than I?" As if he had said, he sits enthroned in higher glory than you can frame any conception of, by beholding me in so mean a condition on earth. We are as remote, and as much short in our thoughts as to the conceiving the glory of the supreme King, as a peasant, who never saw any thing better than his own cottage, from conceiving the splendour of the most glorious prince's court. But if that "faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," be much accustomed to its proper work and business, the daily delightful visiting and viewing the glorious, invisible regions; if it be often conversant in those vast and spacious tracts of pure and brightest light, and amongst the holy inhabitants that replenish them; if it frequently employ itself in contemplating their comely order, perfect harmony, sublime wisdom, unspotted purity, most fervent, mutual love, delicious conversation with one another, and perpetual, pleasant consent in their adoration and observance of their eternal King; who is there to whom it would not be a solace to think, I have such and such friends and relatives, (some perhaps as dear as my own life) perfectly well-pleased, and happy among them! How can your love, Madam, (so generous a love towards so deserving an object!) how can it but more fervently sparkle in joy, for his sake, than dissolve in tears for your own?

Nor should such thoughts excite over-hasty, impatient desires of following presently into heaven, but to the endeavours of serving God more cheerfully on earth, for our appointed time: which I earnestly desire your Ladyship would apply yourself to, as you would not displease God, who is your only hope, nor be cruel to yourself, nor dishonour the religion of Christians, as if they had no other consolations than this earth can give, and earthly power take from them. Your Ladyship (if any one) would be loath to do any thing unworthy your family and parentage. Your highest alliance is to that Father and family above, whose dignity and honour are, I doubt not, of highest account with you.

I multiply words, being loath to lose my design;—and shall only add that consideration which cannot but be valuable with you, upon his first proposal, who had all the advantages imaginable to give it its full weight;—I mean that of those dear pledges left behind. My own heart even bleeds to think of the case of those sweet babes, should they be bereaved of their other parent too. And even your continued, visible dejection would be their unspeakable disadvantage. You will always naturally create in them a reverence of you; and I cannot but apprehend how the constant mien, aspect and deportment of such a parent will insensibly influence the temper of dutiful children; and (if that be sad and despondent) depress their spirits, blunt and take off the edge and quickness, upon which their future usefulness and comfort will

much depend. Were it possible their (now glorious) father should visit and inspect you, would you not be troubled to behold a frown in that bright, serene face? You are to please a more penetrating eye, which you will best do, by putting on a temper and deportment suitable to your weighty charge and duty, and to the great purposes for which God continues you in the world, by giving over unnecessary solitude and retirement, which (though it pleases) doth really prejudice you, and is more than you can bear. Nor can any rules of decency require more. Nothing that is necessary and truly Christian ought to be reckoned unbecoming. David's example, (2 Sam. xii. 20,) is of too great authority to be counted a pattern of indecency. The God of heaven lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and thereby put gladness into your heart; and give you to apprehend him saying to you, "Arise, and walk in the light of the Lord."

That I have used so much freedom in this paper, I make no apology for; but do therefore hide myself in the dark, not judging it consistent with that plainness which I thought the case might require to give any other account of myself, than that I am one deeply sensible of your, and your noble relatives', great affliction, and who scarce ever bow the knee before the mercy-seat without remembering it:—and who shall ever be,

Madam,
Your Ladyship's
Most sincere honourer, and
Most humble, devoted servant.

TO A FRIEND, ON THE LOSS OF AN EXCELLENT WIFE.

I SERIOUSLY lament your new affliction, whereof I lately had the surprising account. And I should be the more concerned for it, if I did not consider it hath befallen one, who can with judgment estimate and suffer it. He hath enough to relieve him against the ungrateful events which our present state is liable to, who is serious in the belief of God's universal government over this world, and that there is another. The former of these is a principle much abused by some; which no more proves it false, than the gospel, out of which some have the mischievous skill to extract a deadly savour. It is our great privilege, for which we ought to be thankful, that by such arguments whereby we can most certainly demonstrate to ourselves that there is a God, we can as certainly prove that he is not an Epicurean God; unto which imaginary idol only that could belong, to be disturbed by being concerned about human affairs. But if He knew the true nature of God better, who came forth from him into our world on purpose to make him known, we are sufficiently assured, not a hair can fall from our head without him, much less so considerable a part of ourselves.

This is not the state wherein things are to be unexceptionably well. But we have cause, as things are, to acknowledge and adore the wisdom

and goodness of Providence, that the wickedness of the world hath not in so many thousand years quite confounded families and all human society long ago: but that as wise counsel did first settle the institution of those lesser societies, God hath from age to age renewed the impression of that part, among others, of the law of nature, by which men are prompted as by instinct to preserve them; besides the positive precept he hath given, setting out to each relative the duty whereby order is to be preserved in them. And when we know his government extends so low, how gladly ought we to submit ourselves to it, and allow him to determine how long we should enjoy such relatives, as well as that there should be any such. For we know that they were appointed but for this temporary estate, not for that wherein we are to be as the angels of God in heaven, where each one hath a subordinate self-sufficiency, and needs not the meet helps which the exigency of this state makes so useful. And, therefore, the reason as well as the authority of such precepts is most entirely to be subscribed to, that because the time is short, they that have wives be as though they had none; they that rejoice (in having them) as if they rejoiced not; they that weep (in losing them) as though they wept not. So our affections will correspond to the objects which are of the same make; for the fashion of the world passeth away. And it were a gloomy thought to consider all as passing and vanishing, if we did not seriously believe that it vanishes to make way for another that shall never vanish, and that shall shortly enter in its perfect glory, and fill up the whole stage. Scaffolds are taken down, when the eternal building is finished.

TO A GENTLEWOMAN, ON THE LOSS OF A BELOVED DAUGHTER.

DEAR AND HONOURED MADAM,

DID you think, two or three months ago, such a trial was so near? Such sad futurities God, in his mercy to us, hides from us, that we may not afflict ourselves before he afflicts us: and that, when he intends we should suffer that particular affliction but once, *viz.* when it comes, we may not impose so hardly upon ourselves, as to suffer it a thousand times over before it comes. "Sufficient is the day," &c. If he should have made us all prophets, in reference to all the events of our time, we should bring all the evils of every future day into every former day; as if the evil of the day were not enough for the day.

But though he gives us not certain predictions of such evils lest he should torment us, he gives forewarnings lest he should surprise us. He hath told us we must all once die, and not when; that life is a vapour; that all flesh is grass; that the beauty or glory of it is but as the flower of grass; withering things! He hath asserted his own dominion over lives, and over the spirits of all flesh as the God of them, to lodge and dislodge them, where and as he pleases. And who are we, that we should grudge him that dominion? or so much as wish

we could have wrested that part of his empire out of his hands? But when he afflicts, it is good to consider what it is for. It comes not out of the dust, though it may reduce us or ours thither. And if our utmost search cannot find out a particular cause, (wherein we should take heed of being too indulgent and partial to ourselves, but should beg that what we know not he would teach us) yet we should, however, more earnestly endeavour to improve the affliction to the general end which we may be sure he aims at, to withdraw our minds from this present world and state of things; to take heed of being peremptory in laying any designs that must be measured by time, and be subject to the uncertainties of it; to determine nothing but with that reserve, "If God will we shall do this or that," (James iv. 15,) to have our minds ingulphed and swallowed up, not of the stream of time, but of the ocean of eternity; to be easily taken off from any purpose. the scene whereof must be laid on this earth, or lower world; to have our hearts more entirely and more strongly set upon God, so as to be able to say, "Whom have I in heaven or earth besides thee?" that the true end may be gain, though such a comfort be lost, and the particular offending cause cannot be found.

We may err, in thinking some such particular offence must be fastened upon. If it clearly can, it ought: if not, it is better forbear judging than misjudge. Possibly chastening for a particular sin may not be in God's design; it is not always. We may be sure it never is his principal design in taking away one relative from another. He made all things (principally) for himself; he made us but secondarily for one another. If his principal design in making such a creature was not to please me, his principal design in taking it away was not to displease or afflict me. He hath his own greater and higher end concerning his own creature, to glorify himself upon it, and by it, in a greater world than this. Many afflictions are for trial; and that in such a case is an awful thought.

The jealous God hath me now under trial, how I can bear, how I can submit, how I can reverence his hand, how I can behave myself towards him when he afflicts; whether I will venture to contend with him, or be sullen and morose towards him; because he hath bereaved me of a child I delighted in, whether I better loved him or my child. The trial may be manifold;—of my faith, of my patience, of my fear of him, of my love to him:—and I may add, it may be intended for a trial of gratitude, and a mighty trial that is. We are required, in every thing to give thanks. And Job did it, and said, "Blessed be the name of the Lord," when with all his substance he took away all his children at once; "The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken." The injunction, "In every thing give thanks," signifies there is in every thing some matter of praise. I know not so immediately what was in this case: but if there was what I have heard, great indications of early piety, if there were grounds to hope there was a work of regeneration wrought, there is infinitely more matter of thanksgiving than complaint. What had the life of a child been worth without this, when better never to have been born? It is a far greater thing if he have taken her as his own child, than if he had left her to you, only as yours. If you have faith to look into the unseen world, and behold her taken into the society of angels, and of the spirits of just

men made perfect, how much more hath God done for her and you, than if he had left her to your care and provision in this wretched world? We are told there is joy in heaven for the conversion of a sinner: much more for the glorification of a convert! That joy ought to swallow up in very great part your sorrow. The good Lord frame your spirit suitably to these things, in whom I am,

Your truly respectful servant,
(Very sensible of your case,)
J. HOWE.

Love Lane, Aldermanbury,
London, September 29, 1694.

THE TWO FOLLOWING ARE TO A NEW MARRIED COUPLE,

(Who were persons of distinction,) that were written on the same sheet of paper, that was directed to the lady with whom Mr. Howe had been long acquainted.

MOST HONOURED SIR,

I THANKFULLY acknowledge the favour of your welcome lines, which ought to be most entirely so, both upon the account of the author, and the matter of them. For though my opportunity for so desirable an acquaintance hath been but little as to the circumstance, it hath been much as to the substance of what I know of you, in ways that gave me greatest assurance, before I had the happiness of oral converse with you. Nor could any thing be more grateful to me, than to read you from your own hand so related, and so well pleased (as I doubt not you will be daily more and more,) with your relation, and the other accessory correlates, with whom God hath cast your lot.

I believe you have much reason to bless God, (who orders all things to the best advantage to such as sincerely give themselves up to his conduct) that he led you not into such a condition and state of life as he now at length hath brought you into, before you were well acquainted with the rules and duties of it, better than to need help from such a one as I. But, among the many other precepts that concern that case, I dare adventure to recommend those of 1 Cor. vii. 29—31: and pursuantly thereto, to offer to your thoughts that this can be but a partial temporary felicity, and so far only so at all, as it is enjoyed only as mediate, and subservient to the full and final felicity which we are professedly seeking and waiting for: so far ought it to be to oppose it, or let it be an obstruction thereto. Which is the nature of all good things that have only the goodness of the means, and not of the end, that their goodness is variable, and by misapplication may degenerate into a hurtful evil. Within the compass of such things is the truth of those words to be confined; *nil prodest, quod non lædere possit idem.* It is beyond the measure of any created good to be universally so. That therefore which in its own place is a real good, applied to the particular purpose which it is capable of serving, out of that place, and being trusted, valued and delighted in beyond the mea-

sure which God and the nature of the thing have stated and set, may become a hurt to us.

But there can be no greater or more endearing obligation to use any mercy for God, than an habitual fixed sense of its having been received from him, and a deeply radicated and often repeated agnition of his sovereign hand in ordering it to be our lot, with all the circumstances that have had any reference thereto. For what ingenuous heart can endure to oppose to him, or employ against him, the (apprehended) fruit of his own favour and kindness, a pledge of his paternal love and care so understood? And therefore the greater the gift is, (still considered under that strict notion) the stronger is the inducement to honour and serve the Giver with it, and to enjoy according to prescription, what we enjoy not but by his vouchsafement.

If to all this I should add a request to you to be exceeding kind to my most dear and honoured friend, it were the greatest impertinence in all the world. For she having such a temper to work upon, will make you so, whether you will or no: and I might as well use argumentst to persuade a fragrant flower to send forth its grateful odours, when a most benign orient sun is plying it with its cherishing morning beams. Such may you long be, both of you mutually (sun and flower) to each other, shining and flourishing with all the influence and under the continual blessing of Heaven. So shall you communicate a part of that joy, which I most sincerely wish you, to,

Sir,

Your very faithful and affectionate humble servant,

J. HOWE.

Whatsoever leisure, (most dear and honoured madam) you may suppose me to have, I had little reason to suppose —— and yourself to have much, from the reading of one another, to cast your eyes upon any thing I could write. But if after this paper shall have lain one quarter of a year somewhere near your dressing-box, you find it not unseasonable to bestow a glance upon it, you will then at length find your disappointment. For it will tell you nothing but what you well knew, or might easily guess before; that having a constant, most affectionate respect and honour for you, I cannot but be highly pleased, that you are so.

And methinks it should not much surprise you, if I farther say, I would have you somewhat to alter (or make your exception to) your own rule, and not show the less kindness to —— for that he is a married man. This will not be strange to you, if you remember some of your last winter lines.

After this hath made you smile a little, as that of yours did me, then think that this novelty in your condition will neither make nor allow you to smile always, though I hope it will add a great deal to the comfort and pleasantness of your days. And you may sometime have occasion to think seriously together, of the sense of those words, Luke xiv. 26. And always remember the subordination that all creature-love must be in, to that of the supreme object of our love. How pleasant a thing

will it be to have hearts united and consenting in the resolution of loving Him perpetually above all, to whom we owe our all, and who is "altogether lovely!" to consult and conspire together how most to promote his interest, and improve in acquaintance with him and conformity to him. This I believe your heart to be much formed to beforehand. The great care must be, that such resolutions do not gradually languish. We find many are apt by unobserved degrees to starve the good affections and inclinations, which they would abhor to assassinate by a sudden violence. I write securely that such an intimation will, by so great a kindness as yours, be very well taken from

Your Ladyship's

Most affectionate, humble servant,

J. HOWE.

THE FOLLOWING

Was written upon occasion of the decease of both the parents of the lady aforesaid, within about eight months of each other.

MOST HONOURED, DEAR MADAM,

WHEN I heard of your former great loss, I was confined by distemper to my bed: and I received information of the other, when I was going a great journey to accompany my wife and daughter to the Bath, from whence they are not returned as yet, and I came home from my journeyings but last week. I have not in the mean time forgot your Ladyship's affliction, nor been without the apprehension how tender a sense your loss of two such parents must be accompanied with. Nor should I now mention it, did I not apprehend it may yet be reflected on to better purpose than only to renew your sorrow. And that it may, I pray you let it be remembered in the first place, with serious gratitude, (for we are required in every thing to give thanks) that God continued to you the comfort of such relations so long, and for the many mercies he made them instrumental of to you in your tender years; that he vouchsafed to you the blessing of so excellent an education by their means, that you were thereby brought to know him and his Christ; that by their care you were so comfortably settled in the world, and in a station wherein he hath given you the opportunity of being so serviceable in building up a family for him, and of contributing to the planting and propagating religion in it; and that you see so much of a blessing from heaven upon the plantation. Your part is that of a mother, and you have had a great example before your eyes. That may still live (and I doubt not will) in your mind and heart, while the person that gave it still lives in a higher region, whither following such steps, you also will be translated in the fittest season.

I pray for the welfare in all valuable respects of your Ladyship, and all yours; being in great sincerity, your Ladyship's

Most respectful, and most faithful, humble servant,

J. HOWE.

Love Lane, Aldermanbury, London, Sept. 5, 1695.

THE FOLLOWING WAS TO THE SAME, ON THE DEATH OF A MOST HOPEFUL SON.

Most worthily honoured Sir, with
My dearest and most honoured Lady,

It would be incomparably more grievous to me at this time to write to you, if I were under a necessity of writing nothing but were mournful and sad. The same thing if we turn it round, will be found to have a double aspect. That dispensation that represents you deprived of an earthly son, speaks you the parents of a glorified child, more highly dignified than it was possible he could have been on earth. This post brings you greater news than if it had informed you, your son is created emperor of Germany, or king of France or Spain. Let us speak and think of things as we believe, and profess to believe. Indeed, if our apprehensions of their state in the unseen world, who were true lovers of God, have nothing of solace and pleasure in them, it is mere useless, empty profession they are all to be resolved into, and not faith.

My heart bleeds for you, and with you both, but it can do you no good to tell you so. I believe your lovely son unfeignedly loved God: and then read the rest, 1 Cor. ii. 9; James i. 10, 12. Of how great use might he have been in this world! But are those glorious creatures above, to whom he is now joined, inactive or unemployed? And are not their employments more noble and sublime, according to the more enlarged capacity of their faculties, and the higher dignity of their state? He was born to very considerable things as your heir; but he was begotten again to a more glorious inheritance, and the lively hope of it. 1 Pet. i. 3. They that were about him, before it was possible for me to see him, told me he was insensible, as he was before I heard of his illness: but at my coming to him, he knew me at first sight, and seemed to have the use of his understanding for nothing but religion. He then spake not one misplaced word; said he doubted not God was his Father, and that his present affliction was from the hand of that Father, not of an enemy. He desired me to pray with him, and seemed understandingly and affectionately to concur. This was on the Lord's day, and the next was the day of his glorious translation, near noon, before I could reach him a second time.

Mr. C— came to me presently after, to advise with me about disposal of the body; who could give no advice but in the general, to have it prepared for interment in a way that might be decent, and not profusely expensive: not doubting but that there might be more particular direction from yourself before actual interment, sent to Mr. C—, &c. who is willing to take the care upon him of seeing instructions fulfilled.

The Lord support you both, and abundantly bless the rest of yours.

I am, most honoured Sir and Madam,
Your most affectionately sympathizing servant in Christ our Lord,
JOHN HOWE.

St. John's Street, London, Jan. 14, 1698.

LETTER FROM MR. HOWE TO MR. SPILSBURY.

London, April 20, 1695.

My dear Brother,

You strangely forget yourself, when you say I gave you no account of the Pinner's Hall business, of which I sent you a large narrative when the business was recent; which if it miscarried, tell me so, and I promise you I will never do the like again: for it is a very discouraging thing, when it is so hard a matter to get time to write such long letters, to have them lost by the way; or it is not better, if when they are received, they are taken *pro non scriptis.* God knows how I strove against that division. Almost all my friends that called me to bear a part in that lecture, perceiving the violence of the other party, agreed to remove to a much more convenient place; and they were, so far as I can learn, the greatest part of the *ancient subscribers,* who were grave, sober citizens. They invited Mr. Mead as well as me. If he would not go, I could not help that. His acquaintance lay more among the other, as mine did with these. He and they all know the many meetings we have had to prevent the breach; he and I with divers of them on both sides. And they (who are now of Pinner's Hall) ran against his advice and mine, when they had desired us to meet purposely to advise them. He hath been since as weary of them as others, as he hath owned to me. They avowed it for a principle before we parted, they would lay any of us aside at their pleasure without giving a reason; and were told thereupon, we would lay down without giving them a reason; though I think that itself was a sufficient reason. They know too how often, since the lecture was broken into two, and it appeared now there were two congregations which no one place could receive, I have urged both publicly and privately, that the same Lecturers might alternate in both places, which would take away all appearance of disunion; and who they were only that opposed it. Upon these terms I had preached with them still; but I will not be tied to them, nor any party, so as to abandon all others. My frequent insisting in sermons among them, when I saw whither things tended, that these were tokens of what was coming, (just as thou writest) will be thought on, it may be, hereafter, though then it was not. Above all that which determined me was, that when I solemnly proposed to them in a sermon the keeping a Fast, before they went on to that fatal rupture; and it was as solemnly promised by the chief of them, there should be no step farther made without a Fast; it should be declined afterwards. Hereupon I told them in my last sermon there, I should be afraid of confining myself to such as were afraid of fasting and prayer in so important a case, (repeating their own good resolution to that purpose;) and began my course in the other place with a Fast, to lament what we could not prevent. These things will be recollected another day.

In the mean time there never was greater intimacy or endearedness between Mr. Mead and me, than now. Last week, he desired me only, without any other, to join with him in keeping a Fast at his house, about some private affairs of his own, which we did. I was to have preached at his place to-morrow, after my own work at home, but present indis-

position prevents me as to both. We have, however, agreed to exchange sometimes; but this cannot last long. The things that threaten us make haste. Only let us be found among the mourners in Zion; comforts will come, in this or the better world. I just now heard from Mr. Porter out of Sussex, who inquires after thee.

In the Lord, farewell:

To thee and thine, from me and mine,

With most entire and undecaying affection,

J. H.

THE THREE FOLLOWING WERE WRITTEN BY MR. HOWE, TO HIS DEAR AND INTIMATE FRIEND, MR. SPILSBURY.

My dear Brother,

How hard a matter is it to keep up converse at this rate, when all that is pleasant and gainful in it lies on one side only! I read thy lines with fruit and delight; but have nothing to return of any value. And if a conscience is to be exercised in this sort of traffic, or indeed but a tolerable ingenuity, it cannot but occasion some regret, to barter away things of no worth for good commodities. If I tell thee I live, what doth that signify? When life itself is so little worth, how despicable is the notice of it! If I tell thee I love thee, thou knowest it before as to the *quod sit;* but for the *quid sit*, no words can express it; therefore the offer at it is vain. When, when shall we meet above? That will make us pure good company, when dulness and sluggishness are shaken off and gone, and we shall be all spirit and life! Yet we shall be doing our Lord some service here, or that he will accept as such, if we be sincere. Thou wilt be visited by a worthy person ere long, that is gone first to Kidderminster, and means after he hath seen the son to come to the father.

Cordial salutations from me and mine, to thee and thine. Farewell in our dear Lord: and still remember,

Thy entirely affectionate,

J. HOWE.

St. John Street, Jan. 25, 1698.

May I once more hope to salute my dear brother in this world? Whether I shall or not, I must leave to Him to whom greater, and all things must be left. Thou mayest have taken thy flight before this reach thee; but the soul and spirit from whence it comes may in due time, through the infinite riches of freest grace, and the atoning blood of that sacrifice which once for all was offered up. We come to the general assembly, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, but as we come to Jesus the mediator of the new testament, and to the blood of sprinkling. By his own blood he is entered into the holy of holies, as the forerunner, and for us. Upon such terms may sinful, unprofitable servants hope to enter, and be received under the notion of faithful, and as those that are graciously counted such, into the joy of their Lord. Thou art ready to

enter, and will shortly be adoring before the throne: O with what complacency! receiving the end of thy faith, having fought the good fight of it! And must thy poor brethren left behind, sigh and groan still, amidst their drowsy hearers, and too drowsy fruitless labours? But I envy thee not: and those that are dearest and nearest to thee, owe thee so much as to rejoice in thy joy, while they cannot as yet in their own. John xiv. 28. Thou art upon my heart, if God saw it good, to live and die with thee. This day se'nnight thy worthy brother B. and my brother F. dined with me, when thou wast most affectionately remembered; but art no day forgotten, by thy sincere lover, and of all thine, hoping and aiming (though faintly) to be thy follower,

J. HOWE.

If there be joy in heaven for a converted sinner, shall there not for a glorified saint? and the leader and teacher of many such? some that are in glory, and others that shortly shall be? O the triumph at thy abundant entrance!

Worthy Mr. Spilsbury, to whom this letter was written, died the 10th of July following.

PREFACES AND DEDICATIONS.

DEDICATION PREFIXED TO THE THIRD VOLUME OF DR. MANTON'S WORKS.

To the High and Mighty Prince William, by the grace of God, King of England, France, and Ireland, &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

THIS relict of the worthy deceased author was long since intended, when you were at a greater distance, to be sent abroad under the patronage of your great name. His own name indeed hath long been, and still continues, so bright and fragrant in England, that your majesty's condescending goodness will count it no indignity to yours, to impart some of its more diffused beams and odours to it. However, if what there was of presumption in that first intention can be pardoned, no reason can be apprehended of altering it upon your nearer and most happy approach unto us.

The kind design and blessed effect whereof, (compared with the scope and design of this excellent work) do much the more urgently invite to it. For as you come to us with the compassionate design of a deliverer, and the wonderful blessing of Heaven hath rendered you also a victor and a successful deliverer; the design of this book is to represent that faith, which is the peculiar and most appropriate principle of what is (like your own) the most glorious of all victories. You have over-

come, not by the power of your arms, but by the sound of your name, and by your goodness and kindness, which so effectually first conquered minds, as to leave you no opportunity of using the other more harsh and rugged means of conquest. Yea, and your success is owing to a greater name than yours; our case, and the truth of the thing, allow and oblige us in a low and humble subordination to apply those sacred words, "Blessed is he that cometh to us in the name of the Lord." The power of which glorious name is wont to be exerted according as a trust is placed in it. We acknowledge and adore a most conspicuous Divine presence with you in this undertaking of yours, which is not otherwise to be engaged than by that faith of which the apostle and this author do here treat. This faith, we are elsewhere told, overcomes this world; and are told here in what way, by representing another, with the invisible Lord of both worlds; being "the substance of what we hope for, and the evidence of what we see not, and whereby we see him who is invisible." This world is not otherwise to be conquered than as it is an enemy; it is an enemy by the vanities, lusts, and impurities of it. That faith which foresees the end of this world; which beholds it as a vanishing thing, passing away with all the lust of it; which looks through all time, and contemplates all the affairs and events of this temporary state, as under the conduct and management of an all-wise, and almighty, invisible Ruler; which penetrates into eternity, and discovers another world and state of things which shall be unchangeable and of everlasting permanency, and therein beholds the same invisible, glorious Lord, as a most gracious and bountiful rewarder of such as serve and obey him with sincere fidelity in this state of trial and temptation here on earth; such a faith cannot but be victorious over the lusts, vanities, impurities, and sensualities of this present evil world. Such a faith working by love to God, and good men, and all mankind, and being thereupon fruitful in the good works of piety, sobriety, righteousness, and charity, will be the great reformer of the world, conquer its malignity, reduce its disorders, and infer a universal harmony and peace.

Even among us, the noblest part of your Majesty's conquest is yet behind. It cannot but have been observed, that for many years by-past, a design hath been industriously driven, that we might be made papists, to make us slaves; and for the enslaving us, to debauch us, and plunge us into all manner of sensuality; from a true apprehension, that brute and slave are nearest akin, and that there is a sort of men so vile and abject, (as the ingenious expression of a great man among the Romans once was,) *quos non decet esse nisi servos*, to whom liberty were an indecency; and who should be treated unbecomingly, if they were not made slaves; that we should be fit to serve the lusts and humours of any other man, when once we become servile to our own. And next, that the religion might easily be wrested away from us, which was become so weak and impotent as not to be able to govern us: and that if humanity were eradicated, the principles and privileges that belong to our nature torn from us, easy work would be made with our Christianity and religion. What hath been effected among us by so laboured a design, through a long tract of time, is before you as the matter of your remaining victory; which as on our part it will be the more difficult, where the pernicious humour is inveterate; so your Majesty's

part herein will be most easy, your great example being, under the supreme power, the mover, the potent engine which is to effect the hoped redress; and your more principal contribution hereunto consisting but in being yourself, in expressing the virtue, prudence, goodness, and piety, which God hath wrought in your temper. The design of saying this is not flattery, but excitation. Give me leave to lay before your Majesty somewhat that occurs in a book written twenty-seven years ago, not by way of prophecy, but probable conjecture of the way wherein a blessed state of things in these parts of the world is likely to be brought about.

"God will stir up some happy king or government in some country of Christendom, endued with wisdom and consideration, who shall discern the true nature of godliness and Christianity, and the necessity and excellency of serious religion, and shall place his honour and felicity in pleasing God and doing good, and attaining everlasting happiness; and shall subject all worldly respects unto these high and glorious ends; shall know that godliness and justice have the most precious name on earth, and prepare for the most glorious reward in heaven," &c.

With how great hopes and joy must it fill every upright heart, daily (as they do) to behold in your Majesty, and in your royal consort, (whom a Divine hand hath so happily placed with you on the same throne) the same lively characters of this exemplified idea! It cannot but inspire us with such pleasant thoughts, that winter is well-nigh gone, and the time of singing of birds approaches; the night is far spent, and the day is at hand, a bright and glorious morning triumphs over the darkness of a foul, tempestuous night; the sober, serious age now commences, when sensuality, falsehood, cruelty, oppression, the contempt of God and religion, are going out of fashion; to be a noted debauchee, of a vicious life, and dishonest mind, capable of being swayed to serve ill purposes without hesitation, will no longer be thought a man's praise, or a qualification for trusts. It shall be no disreputable thing to profess the fear of God, and the belief of a life to come. A scenical, unserious religion, a spurious, adulterated Christianity, made up of doctrines repugnant to the sacred oracles, to sound reason, and even to common sense, with idolatrous and ludicrous formalities, and which hate the light, shall vanish before it. There shall be no more strife about unnecessary circumstances; grave decencies in the worship of God, that shall be self-recommending, and command a veneration in every conscience, shall take place. There shall be no contention amongst Christians, but who shall most honour God and our Redeemer, do most good in the world, and most entirely love, and effectually befriend and serve one another; which are all things most connatural to that vivid, realizing, victorious faith here treated of.

Nor are other victories alien to it over the armed powers of God's visible enemies in the world, such as he may yet call your Majesty with glorious success to encounter in his name, and for the sake of it. In some following verses of this chapter, (wherein the line of the apostle's discourse went beyond that of this worthy author's life) this is represented as the powerful instrument which those great heroes employed in their high achievements of "subduing kingdoms, working righteousness, (or executing God's just revenges upon his unyielding enemies) obtaining promises, stopping the mouths of lions, quenching the violence

of fire, escaping the edge of the sword, whereby out of weakness they were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens;"—by this *faith* they, in the prophet's lofty style, (Isa. xxxiv. 5,) as it were bathed their sword in heaven, gave it a celestial tincture, made it resistless and penetrating. This is the true way, wherein (according to the divinest philosophy) the spirit of a man may draw into consent with itself the universal, almighty Spirit. And if the glorious Lord of hosts shall assign to your Majesty a farther part in the employments of this noble kind, may he gird you with might unto the battle; may your bow abide in strength, and the arms of your hands be made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, even by the God of your fathers, who shall help you, and by the Almighty who shall bless you; and may he most abundantly bless you with the blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. May he cover your head in fight, and crown it with victory and glory, and grant you to know, by use and trial, the power of that faith, in all its operations, which unites God with man, and can render, in a true and sober sense, and to all his own purposes, a human arm omnipotent. Which is the serious prayer of,

Your Majesty's most devoted
And most humble servant and subject,
JOHN HOWE.

PREFACE TO MANTON'S SERMONS.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR THOMAS ABNEY, KNIGHT, ALDERMAN, AND LORD MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LONDON, WITH HIS MOST RELIGIOUS CONSORT.

My Lord and Lady,

Whoever *have known* the spirit and temper of the worthy Dr. Manton, appearing in his not yet forgotten life, and conspicuous in his never to be forgotten writings; and *do know* any thing of your temper and spirit, will not think it an incongruity that your names and his do stand together on the same page. Your Lordship's high esteem and value of him, made public to the world, can reflect no dishonour upon you either in your own judgment, or of any man that is a personal judge of persons and things.

And your Ladyship's kindness to his memory is even hereditary, descending to you from your worthy father, between whom and him there was so inward and continued a friendship, as scarce ever hath been a greater, expressed by beneficence on the one part, and gratitude on the other. And that an eminent servant of Christ, who through the tract of so many years hath been so great and public a teacher and example of the ancient serious piety, righteousness, sobriety, strictness of manners, with most diffusive charity, (for which London hath been renowned for some ages beyond most cities in the world,) should have his memory revived by such a testimony from persons under your character, and who hold so public a station as you do in it, can never be thought unbecoming as long as clearly explained and exemplified

religion, solid, useful learning, and good sense are in any credit in the world.

This volume will, as an addition to his many former most useful and most approved works that have gone before it, further, through God's blessing, contribute to the mending the world. And as it adds reputation to the author, so will the countenance you give it, add to your own reputation. That it may also redound to your real, and the common advantage, is the cordial prayer of,

My honoured Lord and Lady,

Your most faithful, humble servant in Christ,

JOHN HOWE.

PREFACE TO THE FUNERAL SERMON FOR THE REV. HENRY NEWCOME, OF MANCHESTER, BY JOHN CHORLTON.

To the Christian reader, especially such as lived under the excellent Mr. Newcome's most fruitful ministry.

Two things come under present consideration—the following discourse, and the occasion of it. There is nothing to make the former unacceptable, but the latter. You have, here, a most sublime portion of Scripture very aptly explained, and usefully applied, so as to minister light and warmth to them that read. That only in the whole which is grievous is, that we are told worthy Mr. Newcome is dead! This is a gloomy theme, and is only capable of a more lightsome, pleasant aspect, from the brightness of the firmament, and the lustre of the stars, into which so wise and powerful preachers of the glorious gospel are at length transformed, as this discourse excellently shows. In the mean time, this is a loss which few can estimate, though they that suffer it, are very many. It may be truly said of such a man, as "unknown, and yet well known." They that knew him best, could know but a small part of his true and great worth, and might always apprehend, when they knew most of him, there was still much more that they knew not; his most sincere and inartificial humility, still drawing a veil over his other excellencies, which it hid and adorned at once; so as the appetite of knowing more, must always meet with a check and an incitation at the same time. There was in him a large stock of solid learning and knowledge, always ready for use; for ostentation, never. Conscience the most strict, and steady to itself, and the remotest from censoriousness of other men. Eloquence without any labour of his own, not imitable by the greatest labour of another. Oh, the strange way he had of insinuating and winding himself into his hearers' bosoms! I have sometimes heard him when the only thing to be regretted was, that the sermon must so soon be at an end. Conversation, so facetious and instructive together, that they who enjoyed it, if they were capable of improving it, could scarce tell whether they went away from him more edified or delighted. He was a burning and a shining light. O Manchester, Manchester! that ancient, famed seat of religion and profession, may Capernaum's doom never be thine! May thy Heyrick, Holling-

worth, Newcome, and thy neighbours, Angier, Harrison, and divers more, never be witnesses against thee! They are dead! "And all flesh is grass,—and the word of the Lord endureth for ever," even that word of the gospel which hath by them been presented to you. It never dies. And may it still abide with you, and in you. O labour to hold forth the word of life, that such as have laboured among you, may rejoice in the day of Christ, that they have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain. Let it appear you are the epistles of Christ ministered by them, to be known and read of all men; so what there appeared of Christ in them will, as in another edition, be seen in you. And thus will the memory of this your last deceased pastor be best preserved among you, when you shall every one discern Mr. Newcome still, in each other's savoury speech, pleasant and composed looks, becoming behaviour, and regular well-ordered conversation. This will make the love of him live still in your hearts, which will no doubt appear, and be exercised towards any of his, you have yet surviving among you, to whom you may show kindness for his sake. Thus you may let the world know your love to him did not die with him, nor was buried in his grave. You will by real proofs testify your value of him whose circumstances at last gave real proof that he sought not yours, but you. I pray God a double portion of Elijah's spirit may rest upon your remaining Elisha,

And am,

Yours in our common Lord,

J. HOWE.

ΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΑ.

A SUCCINCT AND SEASONABLE DISCOURSE OF THE OCCASIONS, CAUSES, NATURE, RISE, GROWTH, AND REMEDIES OF MENTAL ERRORS.

THE reverend author of the ensuing treatises, having in them explained and defended several gospel truths, unto which divers things in the writings of the Reverend Dr. Crisp, deceased, do seem very opposite; whereas some of us, who subscribed a paper, the design whereof was only to testify, that we believed certain writings of the Doctor's *never before published*, were faithfully transcribed by his son, the publisher of them, which paper is now by the bookseller prefixed to the whole volume; containing a large preface which we never saw till after the publication, together with all the Doctor's former works that were *published many years before;* and are hereupon by some weak people misunderstood, as if, by that certificate, we intended an approbation of all that is contained in that volume. We declare we had no such intention: as the paper we subscribed hath no word in it that gives any such intimation: but we are well pleased these later writings are published (in reference whereto we only certified our belief, which we fixedly retain of the publisher's fidelity) as they contain many passages in them that may, in some measure, remedy the hard and hurtful construction that many

expressions were more liable to *in the former;* whereof the Doctor seemed apprehensive himself, when, in the beginning of his discourse on Tit. ii. 11, 12, he speaks thus: ["Beloved, I am jealous of you with an holy jealousy," 1 Cor. xi. 2, 3, "Lest after the first wooing of you in Christ's name, that ye might be espoused unto him; I say, I am jealous, and fear, lest as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtlety, *viz.* bewitching her to a presumptuous, licentious adventuring on God's gentleness, while she tasted the forbidden fruit; so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in him, *viz.* by presuming too much upon him, and adventuring to continue in sin, in hope that grace may abound. For the preventing of which dangerous miscarriage, which hath been the dangerous lot of many thousands, I thought good to step in with this text, which I am persuaded will prove a seasonable warning to some at least."] And this pious caution of the author herein, lest he should be misunderstood, gives us some grounds to believe that he intended them not in the more exceptionable sense. It is best, if an unwary reader receives hurt, that he receives his healing also from the same hand. And whereas a paper was printed upon this occasion soon after the publication of the Doctor's works, we willingly adopt so much of it as is requisite to our present purpose; which is to this effect:—

"Some who subscribed this certificate, saw only the paper itself, to which subscription was desired; never having perused the works of Dr. Crisp. The certificate only concerned the son, not the father; and certified only concerning the son, that they who should subscribe it, believed him in this to deal truly; that he was not a *falsarius;* that he would not say that was his father's, which was not so; a paper so sober, so modest, was *(taken by itself)* scarce refusable by a friend.

"The son's preface, some that subscribed this certificate saw not, nor had any notice, or the least imagination of its contents; otherwise, the part of a friend had certainly been done as well in advising against much of the preface, as in subscribing the certificate.

"For the works of this reverend person themselves, as it no way concerned the subscribing this certificate, to know what they were; so from the opinion that went of the author among many good men, that he was a learned, pious, good man, it was supposed they were likely to have in them many good and useful things; to which it was only needful to think them *his*, not *to think them perfect.*

"We may, in some respect, judge of books as of men; *i. e.* reckon that though divers very valuable men have had remarkable failings, yet that, upon the whole, it is better they have lived, and been known in the world, than that they should not have lived, or have lived obscure.

"The truth is (which we have often considered) that though the great doctrines of the Christian religion do make a most coherent, comely scheme, which every one should labour to comprehend and digest in his mind; yet when the gospel first becomes effectual for the changing men's hearts, it is by God's blessing this or that passage which drops: the most discern not the series and connection of truths at first, and too little afterwards.

"Upon that view of Dr. Crisp's writings we have had since the publication, we find there are many things said in them, with that good savour, quickness, and spirit, as to be very apt to make good im-

pressions upon men's hearts; and do judge, that being greatly affected with the grace of God to sinners himself, his sermons did thereupon run much in that strain. All our minds are little and incomprehensive; we cannot receive the weight and impression of all necessary things at once, but with some inequality; so that when the seal goes deeper in some part, it is shallower in some others.

"If some parts of Dr. Crisp's works be more liable to exception, the danger of hurt thereby seems, in some measure, obviated in some other; as when he says, page 46, vol. i. 'Sanctification of life is an inseparable companion with the justification of a person by the free grace of Christ;' and vol. iv. p. 93, 'That in respect of the rules of righteousness, or the matter of obedience, we are under the law still; or else we are lawless, to live every man as seems good in his own eyes, which I know no true Christian does so much as think.'

"In like manner, whereas in vol. ii. Serm. 15, and perhaps elsewhere, the Doctor seems to be against evidencing our justification and union to Christ, by our sanctification and new obedience; we have the truth of God in this matter plainly delivered by him, vol. iv. p. 36, when he teacheth, that our obedience is a comfortable evidence of our being in Christ; and on that, as well as on many accounts, necessary.

"The difference between him and other good men seems to lie not so much *in the things* which the one or the other of them believes, as about *their order* and *reference to one another;* where, it is true, there may be very *material difference:* but we reckon, that notwithstanding what is more controvertible in these writings, there are much more *material things*, wherein they cannot but agree, and would have come much nearer each other, even in these things, if they did take some words or terms which come into use on the one or the other hand, *in the same sense;* but when one uses a word in *one sense*, another uses the same word (or understands it, being used) in quite *another sense*, here seems a vast disagreement, which proves, at length to be verbal only, and really none at all:—as, let by *condition* be meant a *deserving cause*, (in which case it is well known *civilians* are wont to take it) and the one side would never use it concerning any good act that can be done by us, or good habit that is wrought in us, in order to our present acceptance with God, or final salvation. Let be meant by it somewhat, that by the constitution of the gospel-covenant, and in the nature of the thing, is *requisite* to our present and eternal well-being, without the least notion of the desert, but utmost abhorrence of any such notion in this case; and the other side would as little refuse it. But what need is there for contending at all about a *law term*, about the proper or present use whereof there is so little agreement between *them it seems best to serve*, and *them it offends?* Let it go, and they will well enough understand one another. Again, let *justification* be taken for that which is complete, entire and full, as it results at last from all its causes and concurrents; and, on the one hand, it would never be denied, that Christ's righteousness justifies us at the bar of God in the day of judgment, *as the only deserving cause;* or affirmed, that our faith, repentance, sincerity, do justify us there, *as any cause at all.* Let justification be meant only of being justified in *this or that particular respect;* as for instance, against *this particular accusation*, of never having been a believer: and the honest mistaken *prefacer* would never have said, 'O

horrid!' upon its being said, 'Christ's righteousness doth not justify us in this case: for he very well knows, Christ's righteousness will justify no man that *never was a believer*. But that which must immediately justify him *against this particular accusation*, must be proving that he did sincerely believe; which shows his interest in Christ's righteousness, which then is the only deserving cause of his full and entire justification.

"There is an expression in vol. i. p. 46, 'That salvation is not the end of any good work we do,' which is like that of another; 'we are to act from life, not for life.' Neither of which are to be *rigidly taken*, as it is likely they were never meant in the strict sense. For the former, this reverend author gives us himself the handle for a gentle interpretation, in what he presently subjoins; where he makes the 'end of our good works to be the manifestation of our obedience and subjection; the setting forth the praise of the glory of the grace of God;' which seem to imply, that he meant the foregoing negation in a comparative, not in an absolute sense; understanding the glory of God to be *more principal;* and so, that by *end*, he meant the very *ultimate end:* so for the other, it is likely it was meant, that we should not act or work *for* life *only*, without aiming and endeavouring that we might come to work *from* life *also*.

"For it is not with any tolerable charity supposable, that one would *deliberately say* the *one* or the *other* of these in the rigid sense of the words; or that he would not upon consideration, presently unsay it, being calmly reasoned with. For it were, in effect to *abandon human nature*, and to sin against a very fundamental law of our creation, not to intend our own felicity: it were to make our first and most deeply fundamental duty, in one great essential branch of it, our sin, *viz.* to *take the Lord for our God:* for *to take him for our God* most *essentially* includes our taking him for our *supreme good;* which we all know is included in the notion of the *last end;* it were to make it unlawful to strive against all sin, and particularly against sinful aversion from God; wherein lies the very death of the soul, or the sum of its misery; or to strive after perfect conformity to God in holiness, and the full fruition of him; wherein its final blessedness doth principally consist.

"It were to teach us to violate the great precepts of the gospel; 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out.—Strive to enter in at the strait gate.—Work out your salvation with fear and trembling:' to obliterate the patterns and precedents set before us in the gospel. 'We have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified.—I bear down my body, lest I should be a castaway.—That thou mayest save thyself, and them that hear thee.'

"It were to suppose us bound to do more for the salvation of others, than our own salvation. We are required to save others with fear, plucking them out of the fire. Nay, we were not (by this rule strictly understood) so much as to pray for our own salvation: (which is a doing of somewhat) when no doubt, we are to pray for the success of the gospel to this purpose, on behalf of other men.

"It were to make all the threatenings of eternal death, and promises of eternal life we find in the Gospel of our blessed Lord, useless; as motives to shun the one, and obtain the other: for they can be motives

no way, but as the escaping of the former, and the attainment of the other, have, with us, the place and consideration of an end.

"It makes what is mentioned in the Scripture, as the character and commendation of the most eminent saints, a fault; as of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, &c. That 'they sought the better and heavenly country; and declared plainly,' that they did so; which necessarily implies their making it their end.

"But let none be so harsh as to think of any good man, that he intended any thing of all this; if every passage that falls from us be stretched and tortured with the utmost severity, we shall find little to do besides accusing others, and defending ourselves, as long as we live."

A spirit of meekness and love will do more to our common peace, than all the disputations in the world.

Upon the whole, we are so well assured of the peaceful, healing temper of the present author of these treatises, that we are persuaded he designed such a course of managing the controversies wherein he hath concerned himself, as to prevent, on the one hand, injury to the memory of the dead; and on the other, any hurt or danger to the living.

Nor do we say thus much of him, as if he sought, or did need any letters of recommendation from us; but as counting this testimony to truth, and this expression of respect to him, a debt; to the spontaneous payment whereof, nothing more was requisite, besides such a fair occasion as the Providence of God hath now laid before us, inviting us hereunto.

JOHN HOWE,
VIN. ALSOP,
NATH. MATHER,
INCREASE MATHER,
JOHN TURNER,
RICH. BURES,
THO. POWEL.

PREFACE TO CORBET'S SELF-EMPLOYMENT.

THE character of this holy servant of Christ is already given by an every way suitable hand,* in what part it lay open to the observation of others. His more interior portraiture, which is contained in these papers, was (as it could only be) drawn by himself.

Why it is now exposed to public view, there is no need to be scrupulously careful in giving an account. It must be acknowledged, there is usually with the holiest men, a modest shyness of communicating these privacies of their own souls. Their inner man doth show its own face with the more difficulty, by how much it is more beautiful, and worthy to be beheld. And so it was with this excellent person, as his inscriptions upon these papers show; "The State of my own Soul," and "Notes for myself;" signifying their intended use was that of a mirror to represent himself to his own eye, not to other men's.

* In his funeral sermon by Mr. Baxter.

Yet this aversion, though great, hath not been always invincible, or such as no reasons to the contrary could over-sway. What are the Psalms of David, and sundry memoirs of holy men in Scripture, that were remotest from ostentation and vain-glory, but records of the most secret dispositions and motions of the hidden man of the heart, made public for the instruction of their own and succeeding ages? As also, the other published meditations and soliloquies of some of the greatest worthies in the Christian church, must be understood to have had the same pious design. Nor hath a generous benignity, in some heathens, permitted them to engross all to themselves, or to envy the world those pleasant sensations of their own minds which they thought might be some way instructive and useful to other men. As that renowned philosopher and emperor* is an instance, who scrupled not to write, and leave behind him for this purpose, twelve books concerning his own life.

The thing cannot be culpable, if the design be innocent, which will in great part be discernible in the manner of doing it, when it is with unaffected simplicity, and without studied disguise; as we commend a picture, not so much for its being specious, as that it is like the face. So have good men in giving accounts of themselves, not spared to put in the distempers and disaffections of their spirits, that are as great blemishes and deformities, as a wart or mole on the face; which the faithful pencil must as curiously express, as the greatest decencies.

However, if this publication be praiseworthy, nothing is to be arrogated to the author, as, if it be thought blameable, nothing is to be derogated. For though the work itself (which carries its sufficient praise with it) be owing entirely to him, or rather to the grace of God in him, the making it public is from the advice and desire of some friends, willing to impart what was once most private, for a public good.

It is but the dissection of his soul, less to be regretted by friends, when he is now out of sight, and much more useful, than that of his lately pained body.

And as anatomy discovers all the curious contexture of our bodily fabric, here are vivid representations of faith, love, a heavenly mind, of humility, meekness, self-denial, entire resignedness to the will of God, in their first and continued motions; with whatever parts and principles besides compose the whole frame of the new creature: as if we could perceive with our eyes, how the blood in a human body circulates through all the veins and arteries, how the heart beats, the spirits fly to and fro; and how each nerve, tendon, fibre, and muscle, performs its several operations. Here it may be seen, how a heart touched from above, works and tends thitherward, how it depresses itself in humiliation, dilates itself in love, exalts itself in praise, submits itself under chastenings; how it draws in its refreshings and succours, as there is need.

To many, who have seen so steady, uniform, and amiable a course and tenor of life, how grateful is it to behold the secret motions of those inward, latent principles, from whence all proceeded! Though some others would look no further than the advantages in external respects that accrue by it. As though some content themselves to know by a clock the hour of the day, or partake the beneficial use of some

* Marcus Antoninus.

rarer engine; the more curious, especially any that design imitation and to compose some like thing, would be much gratified, if throug some pellucid enclosure, they could behold all the inward work, an observe how every wheel, spring, or movement, perform their severa parts and offices towards that common use.

What is here presented, as it may be of great usefulness to all tha seriously design the Christian life; so it hath a special use for such a design it not, and who think there is no such thing.

It may peculiarly serve to convince such as are willing to think as i as they can of the calling and office of the ministry, that there are som who serve the Lord in that work, who do not study such subjects as ar here exemplified, only to frame discourses of them, wherewith to enter tain the people for an hour; but for their own use and practice too who live the things which they teach; and eat of the food they prepar for others: who are in good earnest, and most intent to save themselve and those who hear them, and do really venture their own souls upo the same bottom, upon which they would persuade their hearers t venture theirs, taking all possible care, lest, when they preach to others they should themselves be castaways.

The very opinion, that we preach only for form's sake, and to kee up the custom, and believe or regard not what we ourselves say, as wel as the thing itself, is no small, nor perhaps uncommon hindrance to th success of preaching at this day. It is hard to be serious in hearing what I think he is not serious in himself who preaches it. If I appre hend he trifles, it is a great temptation to me to do so too. You ma see, this worthy man considered the gospel as a gospel of salvation, an not only taught, but used it accordingly. How solicitous was he t ground substantially, and strongly, his hope of eternal life! How waril did he feel his way; and labour to understand, and know practically upon what terms he might safely appear before his Judge!

To those who do not so, this ought to be taken for a reprehensiv example, and may be very directive to those who do.

That it may attain its proper ends, is the serious prayer of

One desirous to promote the common salvation,

JOHN HOWE.

FRAGMENTS.

Dr. Calamy says, "The fragment out of Mr. Howe's notes, about a particular faith in prayer, contains only brief hints, which he enlarged on in discourse: but I thought it worth preserving; and I believe there will be several of my mind. It is very concise; and the writing being a mixture of long-hand and short-hand, and the ink in some places almost worn out, it is a very difficult thing to read it: but having got what assistance I could in order to the right reading it, I shall here subjoin it."

James v. 15. *And the prayer of faith shall save the sick; and the Lord shall raise him up.*

It is to be inquired how this is to be understood and applied.

1. How to be understood. Where in the general we must know, it is not to be looked upon as a universal maxim, admitting of no restriction or limitation; for then prayer might make a man immortal, if in every case wherein life were in hazard, any could be procured to employ their faith in prayer on his behalf. Unless we should say, that wherever the desired effect follows not, the faith was wanting which ought to have been exercised in the case. To say that every prayer that has faith in it shall save the sick, is false: but that every prayer that has this special faith in it, shall save the sick, is true.

That, therefore, we may speak the more distinctly, we must understand,

1. That there was somewhat in this matter extraordinary, and appropriate to that time.

2. Somewhat ordinary, and common to all times. We are to distinguish the one and the other.

1. There was somewhat extraordinary in this matter, and appropriate to that time: and that both as to the faith to be exercised, and the effect thereupon.

(1.) As to the faith to be exercised. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick:" that is, in those days when the state of things did to the divine wisdom make it necessary that frequent miracles should be wrought for the confirmation of Christianity, faith was necessary to be exerted in prayer, that should, according to the tenor of the promise made in reference to those times, engage Omnipotency in reference to the thing prayed for: the promise then was, "whatsoever ye pray, believing, ye shall receive;" or it shall be done.

(2.) As to the effect,—that also was supernatural.

Ques. But it may be said, What! universally? What work might the disciples have made in that case!

Ans. The divine power did go forth two ways.

First. In working the faith to be exercised: and,

Secondly. In effecting the thing. So that the matter was always in God's own hand. The Spirit of God could be the author of no vain or imprudent faith, or consequent of it.

This faith of miracles was such a fiducial recumbence on the divine power, in reference to this or that particular work, as whereby that was by his rule engaged to go forth, in saving the sick. This and common faith differ, in respect of the end, and the nature of the influence:—not holy, but physical.

2. There was here also somewhat that was ordinary. The instance of Elias is mentioned, who, (*v.* 17, 18,) it is said, "was a man subject to like passions as we are, and yet he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought her fruit." There is somewhat from that extraordinary case to be learned for common use, *viz.* that what the promise says to us now, we ought as confidently to believe, as they then what it said to them.

Therefore take some propositions, concerning the nature and operation of the faith to be exercised in such a case, and the way wherein prayer ought to be managed and guided, so as that it may be expected to have influence in reference thereto.

(1.) Prayer is a great and indispensable duty. [There is here some reference in the manuscript: but after the utmost search, I know not what to make of it.]

(2.) That therefore we must conclude, whatsoever tends to render it an impertinence, must either be false or misapplied. For it is most plainly a great part of our duty; and it could not consist either with the wisdom or truth of God, to have us enjoined such a duty, and have put energy incessant into the nature of it in vain. We must therefore resolve what is doubtful, by what is plain. It is more plain that prayer is a duty, and more known, than what changes the nature of God can admit.

(3.) The argument from God's unchangeableness would conclude as well against the usefulness of any other duty, that never so directly concerns our salvation.

(4.) Prayer is to be considered, not only as a means to obtain from God what we would have, but as a becoming homage of an intelligent creature.

(5.) Whatsoever unchangeableness we can suppose in the nature of God, [here there is something added in the manuscript which I can make nothing of; and then it follows] and it is unreasonable he should lose his right, by his perfection.

(6.) Yet also it is to be considered as a means to obtain good things, (Job xxi. 15,) [by which I suppose, it was intended to be intimated, that it would be very wicked language in any to offer to say, with those whom Job speaks of in the text cited, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?"]

(7.) We are not to think prayer, though never so qualified, hath any proper efficacy to move God this way or that: not so much as instrumental.

(8.) It is only a condition, upon which it seems good to God to put forth his power.

(9.) It is a condition that hath not always equally certain connexion with the thing we pray for, or other than the promise hath made.

(10.) The promises of God are or must be understood proportionally to the nature of the things promised: which may be either of such a nature, as, &c. [Here the sense is incomplete. I suppose that which may be meant, is, that the things which God has promised, may either admit, or exclude a change. And then it is added, "make men immortal." That is, I suppose, as to this present life. And then the

manuscript goes on,] Things of a variable goodness cannot be the matter of a universal absolute promise. Miracles, &c.

(11.) Prayer may yet be the prayer of faith that God will do what is best. We should not make light of this more valuable object of faith. Suppose two children, which is the most privileged. [This I apprehend refers to the case of Esau and Jacob, so often taken notice of in Scripture.]

(12.) If God will do the thing, prayer in reference to it is not vain. For perhaps he hath wisely and rightly determined, that he will not do it but upon trust of his being acknowledged. This is a great piece of his sovereignty; his dominion and power over lives. I kill, and make alive, *q. d.* God of every life; universal cause.

(13.) It is very absurd to think it were vain to pray unless we were certain it contradicts the nature of prayer. For that supposes the thing in the power of them to whom we pray, and implies a referring it to their pleasure.

(14.) It must be submitted to him to judge what is most honourable for himself. It argues base thoughts of the invisible world, to think, &c. [that is, I suppose, to think we should be able to keep people from thence at our pleasure.]

(15.) What if he had said, "Pray not." [I take this to be designed for an intimation, that had intercourse between an all-sufficient God and us, by prayer, been prohibited, we should have been left in a very helpless and hopeless, miserable and destitute condition.]

FROM A MONUMENTAL SLAB IN THE CHURCH AT KINGSBRIDGE.

IN MEMORIAM SVAVE OLENTEM, AETERNVM COLENDAM, VIRI DESIDERATISSIMI GEORGIJ HVGHES, SS. T.B.,

Plimvdensivm Nvper Pastoris Vigilantissimj,
Sacrae Sensvs Paginae Penitiores Ervere,
Homines Concione Flectere, Precibvs Devm, Mire Edoctj;
Qvi (Solis Aemvlvm) Ab Oriente Avspicatvs Cvrsvm
(Ortv Londinas) Occidentale Dehinc Sidvs Div Clarvit
Lvcem In Vitâ Spargens Vndiqve, Moriens Lvctvm;
Vitaeqve (Vere Vitalis) Cvrricvlo In An. LXIV Perdvcto,
Optima Perfvnctvs, Perpessvs Mala,
Reqviem Tandem Invenit; Animo Qvidem In Cœlis,
Corporj Verò In Svbjacente Tvmvlo,
Ipsis Jvlij Nonis,
Anno Salvtis MDCLXVII,
Symmystae Longè Charissimj Georgij Geofridi, AM.
Cvjvs Exvviae Ante Ter-Novem Annos Ibidem Sitae,
Nvnc Primvm In Cineres Solvuntvr, Novis Miscendos.

Nacta sacros cineres servato fidelitèr Vrna,
Haec vterum satio tibi fœcundabit inertem.
O fœlix tumulj matrix, de morte renatos
Olim tam Claros hosce enixura Gemellos.

Posvit Honoris Et Amoris Ergô

Tho: Crispinvs, Exoniensis.

THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES WERE FOUND WRITTEN IN MR. HOWE'S STUDY BIBLE.

"Dec. 26, 89. Quum diu apud me seriò recogitarem, præter certum et indubium assensum rebus fidei adhibendum, necessarium insuper esse vivificum quendam earundem gustum et saporem, ut majori cum vi et efficaciâ in ipsissima cordis penetralia sese insererent; ibidemque altiùs infixæ, vitam eo potentiùs regerent; neque aliter de bono Deum versus statu conclusum iri, sive sanum judicium posse ratum haberi; cumque pro concione, 2 Cor. i. 12, fusiùs tractâssem, hoc ipso mane ex hujusmodi somnio dulcissimo, primò evigilavi: mirum scilicet à superno Divinæ Majestatis solio, cœlestium radiorum profluvium in apertum meum hiansque pectus, infusum esse videbatur.

"Sæpiùs ab illo insigni die, memorabile illud pignus divini favoris grato animo recolui, atque dulcedinem ejusdem iterum atque iterum degustavi.

"Quæ autem Octob. 22, 1704, id genus mirandâ Dei mei benignitate, et suavissimâ Spiritus Sancti operatione percepi, omnium verborum quæ mihi suppetit copiam, plane superant! Perquam jucundam cordis emollitionem expertus sum, fusis præ gaudio lachrymis, quod amor Dei per corda diffunderetur, mihique speciatim donato in hunc finem Spiritu suo. Rom. v. 5."

We subjoin a translation of the above, from the pen of Mr. Spademan:—

"Dec. 26, '89. After that I had long, seriously, and repeatedly thought with myself, that besides a full and undoubted assent to the objects of faith, a vivifying, savoury taste and relish of them was also necessary, that with stronger force and more powerful energy, they might penetrate into the most inward centre of my heart, and there being most deeply fixed and rooted, govern my life; and that there could be no other sure ground whereon to conclude and pass a sound judgment, on my good estate Godward; and after I had in my course of preaching been largely insisting on 2 Cor. i. 12, ('This is my rejoicing, the testimony of a good conscience,' &c.) this very morning I awoke out of a most ravishing and delightful dream, that a wonderful and copious stream of celestial rays, from the lofty throne of the Divine Majesty, did seem to dart into my open and expanded breast. I have often since with great complacency reflected on that very singular pledge of special divine favour vouchsafed to me on that noted, memorable day; and have with repeated fresh pleasure tasted the delights thereof. But what of the same kind I sensibly felt through the admirable bounty of my God, and the most pleasant comforting influence of the Holy Spirit, on Oct. 22, 1704, far surpassed the most expressive words my thoughts can suggest. I then experienced an inexpressibly pleasant melting of heart, tears gushing out of mine eyes, for joy that God should shed abroad his love abundantly through the hearts of men, and that for this very purpose mine own should be so signally possessed of and by his blessed Spirit. Rom. v. 5."

A SERMON

ON THE OCCASION OF THE JUSTLY LAMENTED DEATH OF THE TRULY REVEREND

MR. JOHN HOWE,

DECEASED APRIL THE 2ND,

Preached to his congregation, April 8, 1705, and published at their request.

By JOHN SPADEMAN, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

"We are your rejoicing, even as you also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." 2 Cor. i. 14.

TO MY SINCERELY HONOURED FRIENDS, MRS. MARGARET HOWE, DR. GEORGE HOWE, MR. JOHN HOWE, MRS. PHILLIPPE COLLET, MR. JAMES HOWE, WITH OTHER NEAR RELATIVES OF THE DECEASED.

MY WORTHY FRIENDS,

IF either the desire of him whom the all-wise Disposer hath translated, or yours, (differing in this single matter from his,) had invited me to preach a funeral sermon for your excellent relative, I should have found a real unwillingness to such a service; and have judged it more eligible to have been wholly silent, than have spoken so few things, as are mentioned in this practical discourse, concerning him. He, indeed, received from the Father of lights, so great a variety of both natural and Christian perfections, that he was not only a shining light and ornament of his age, but an inviting example of universal goodness; the exercises whereof towards men did strongly recommend him to the esteem of those from whom his judgment in some things disagreed. So that, (though he was most remote from seeking honour on this earth) he had that principal recompence of piety in this life, a good name; which must preserve him from oblivion, though all his near relatives and acquaintance should studiously conceal his just praises. Nor can he want a monument to make him live in following ages, whose excellent writings have gained the approving suffrage of those who are capable judges; and they will be valued, while a relish of good sense and genuine piety is found among men.

All this speaks your loss, and of his church, yea, and of the nation, to be the greater; and I persuade myself very few of his order have been so generally lamented: which is a tribute due to his real worth. But the obedience and resignation of your faith have been the more grateful to Him who hath called you to make such an offering, and whose mighty hand alone is able to bind up this wound, and both sustain and guide you in your progress to the same happiness which he now possesseth. If this plain discourse may contribute unto this blessed design, this will induce you to excuse the publishing of it, and the defects which are very obvious in

Your affectionate, faithful servant
In our common Lord,
J. SPADEMAN.

A SERMON.

2 Tim. iii. 14.

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.

It is reasonably supposed that the mantle which fell from the prophet Elijah, as he was taken up into heaven, was highly valued, and carefully preserved, by his disciple Elisha; especially when he experienced a miraculous virtue annexed to it, the waters of Jordan being divided when this garment was applied to them; as we read, 2 Kings ii. 14. Indeed, when your late most worthy pastor, (who may justly be styled an Elijah of this age) was translated by death, he left no garment which has any virtue to recommend it: but (which is far more important) before his translation he let fall such holy instructions and heavenly counsels, as, through divine assistance, are able to dry up the waters of excessive grief, and open a passage into the celestial Canaan, into which himself hath entered. It is not necessary, nor is it my design, to open fresh springs of sorrow for so very grievous a breach as the hand of God hath made, by representing the exceeding loss which his family, and relatives, this society, yea, the whole city and nation, have sustained. There is the justest reason, with heart-affecting sorrow, to repeat Elisha's words, used on the occasion now mentioned, (2 Kings ii. 12,) "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, (England) and the horsemen thereof." The death of one Elijah, who had the spirit of prayer, whereby to open heaven, and bring down refreshing showers of blessings on a whole people;—the death, I say of one such, must be a public and common loss, never enough to be deplored.

The attiring of this place, and of many assembled in it, speaks it to be a house of mourning; but our concernment here is not to indulge a fruitless sorrow, which can neither bring him back to

us, nor assist our happy ascent to him, which is far more covetable, and will certainly be attained, by continuing in those things which we have learned, knowing and considering of whom we have learned them.

This excellent advice, given by the apostle Paul to his disciple Timothy, I have judged a more proper subject of your meditation on this occasion, than an encomium of your deceased pastor; whose truly humble mind made him discover an averseness to any funeral solemnities or discourses, which had a tendency to magnify him and gain public applause: he hated the sounding a trumpet before him, living and dying. I am not appointed to perform such a service, (though but a reasonable tribute to his memory) only the sense of my own duty has induced me to discourse something from the Scripture that hath been read, which will, (through the divine blessing) assist you to improve this severe dispensation, and comply with the apparent design of his office and ministrations. It is evident that such a providence loudly proclaims the vanity of human life, the unalterable law of mortality, which must be executed on the very best inhabitants of this world; so that neither the brightest virtues, nor greatest serviceableness, neither the use of the most promising means, nor the most ardent and united supplications for the prolonging of life, can exempt any from the end of all the living; which, therefore, ought to be laid to heart. But I judge it most useful, that our meditations correspond with the character which was eminently peculiar to him whom God hath taken away from us; and whose long, excellent ministry bespeaks every one of us, in the language of the text: "But continue thou in the things, &c. knowing of whom thou hast learned them."

It is generally agreed by interpreters that the apostle, in the latter part of the verse, intends himself; and that, not only, or principally, as invested with the apostolic office, but as distinguished by something in his temper, conduct, and condition, which did strongly oblige his disciples to continue in the things they had learned; and, being duly considered, would effectually engage them unto this practice.

The preceding context leads us to this explication, where, without once mentioning his apostolic commission, or the miraculous gifts by which he confirmed his doctrine, he only represents to Timothy, (*v.* 10, 12,) "Thou hast fully known (or for a long time hast fully observed) my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me;" plainly intimating, that the life and practice, the sufferings and afflictions, of one who teacheth the gospel of Christ, carry a most cogent argument, and strong efficacy to engage them who are taught to a firm perse-

vering in the truth and duties of the Christian religion; which were (without all doubt) the things which Timothy had learned of this apostle, whose office and design led him to teach the holy doctrine and rules of the gospel.

The text thus cleared, offers to our consideration a twofold important instruction.

I. The possibility and danger of departing from the truth and rule of the gospel, is supposed.

II. A suitable, and (in its own nature) effectual preservative against this evil is provided, *viz.* the actual knowing, and due considering of the character of him of whom they have been learned. As to the former,—

I. The possibility, and danger, of forsaking the truth and rule of the gospel. The supposing of such a thing (in the text) might seem to carry an affront to one of Timothy's excellent piety. Him this apostle calls his "own (or legitimate) son in the faith," (1 Tim. i. 2;) and his "dearly beloved son," (2 Tim. i. 2;) yea, (as some learned men, with great probability conclude) "the pillar and ground of the truth." 1 Tim. iii. 15. For, there is no necessity of giving this character, either to a particular church, or even the universal. However that be, it is unquestionable that Timothy was not only a sincere but a very eminent believer, who had made an uncommon proficiency under the teaching and institution of the apostle Paul; who, thereupon, did give him the office of an evangelist, (far more considerable than that of a bishop, or even a metropolitan, which hath been assigned to him without ground,) yet, notwithstanding, this exhortation to him carrieth a plain supposition, that it was (considering the case abstractly from the divine purpose) possible, even for him, not to continue in the things which he had learned of such a teacher as the apostle Paul: who, therefore, judged it necessary to fortify him by this earnest advice and suitable direction. And we shall perceive just reason to extend the supposition unto all who have learned, even of the best instructors, the sacred truths and duties of the gospel; if we reflect on the various causes of departing from them; as—

1. The native vicious inconstancy and instability of human minds. None are, by renewing grace, made perfect, and delivered from all remaining defects as to the Christian state. If we are not kept and guarded by divine power, we are in continual danger of departing from the living God. Who would have suspected any mutableness in those Israelites, who heard the majestic, terrible voice of God promulgating his law on Mount Sinai? (whom some Jewish authors* have magnified, as if they had all been advanced above the ministering angels) on which occasion they most solemnly obliged themselves to hear and do

* Pirko R. Eliez. C. 47.

all that the Lord their God should speak. Deut. v. 27. And yet so unstable were their hearts, that "they quickly (within less than forty days) turned aside out of the way which God had commanded them." Exod. xxxii. 8. Yea, when the Son of God, the great prophet, was raised up, and sent to the same people among whom he was approved of God by the most stupendous miracles, (such as none other had ever wrought,) one of which, *viz.* the multiplying of the loaves, (by which many thousands were fed) carried such convictive evidence, that the spectators professed, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." John vi. 14. Yet the very next day, many of these very persons who were Christ's disciples departed from him, and walked no more with him. *v.* 66. On this supposition of our vicious instability, the apostle grounds the earnest advice, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. x. 12.

2. The strong, delusive workings of remaining unbelief. This root of apostacy is not totally killed and destroyed, even in those who have the spirit of faith. Hence we find the apostle cautioning them whom he styles "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," (Heb. iii. 1,) to "take heed lest there be in them an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." *v.* 12. How apt are we to admit into our minds a suspicion, lest the gospel-revelation should be a cunning devised fable, a mere invention of deceivers, who for their own interest have framed this doctrine, especially when any are observed to pretend a zeal for it, while they deny it in their works, and turn it into an engine of advancing secular power and advantage; like those, whom the apostle describeth by this infamous character, (1 Tim. vi. 5,) counting religion to be an income, or gainful business, as that passage ought to be rendered.

3. The various discouragements which attend a constant belief and practice of the gospel; which the apostle had his eye upon in the immediately preceding context, where he mentioneth the persecutions and afflictions which still followed him in the discharging of his office, and subjoins, (*v.* 12,) "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," by the reviling tongues, or, (when God permits) by the oppressive hands of evil men: these lions in the way of our duty have terrified many out of it, who have been ashamed or afraid to continue in that course which (though most unjustly) hath the reproachful name of a sect, and is every where spoken against. Acts xxviii. 22. The experience of all places and times informs us, how strong and dangerous impressions have been made by the reproach and contempt, the cross and sufferings, which attend the faithful service of Christ. Even while the memory of our Redeemer was recent, his blood as it were yet warm, and his apostles alive, and shining as lights in the world, there was cause of a sorrowful complaint

of this kind, (2 Tim. i. 15,) "Thou knowest how that all they that are in Asia be turned from me." The true reason of this inexcusable deserting may be discovered in the following part of the chapter, *viz.* they were ashamed of the apostle's chain; they judged it both dishonourable and hazardous to persist in the communion of one who gained nothing among men but disgracing bonds and distressing torments.

4. The strong impressions made by worldly allurements. There is not a more dangerous enemy to our souls, and which so powerfully dissuadeth from continuing in the things they have learned, (of the most excellent teachers,) than the love of this world. Wherever this prevails, it stifleth all the convictions of reason and conscience, it baffleth the force of all the arguments which demonstrate the divine original of the gospel, and the unspeakable importance of the truths and counsels contained in it. There have been, and will be, many to whom the account given of Demas is justly applicable. (2 Tim. iv. 10,) "Demas hath forsaken me, (and consequently, the things he had learned of me) having loved this present world." And never, I think, was there greater danger from this snare, than in the age wherein we live: in which a paganish esteem and admiration of riches and greatness renders all the vast concerns of the other world despicable, and without force. It is most amazing, that Christians should be so blinded, as not to discern, what the pagan Cicero has complained of, *corrupti mores depravatique sunt admiratione divitiarum*, "the manners of men are corrupted and depraved, by the admiring of riches."

5th and last cause of this danger is the seduction and enticement of wicked men, which the apostle remarks in the verse immediately preceding. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving," &c. It is a sad reflection, that too many good men seem contented only to save their own souls, without seeking to allure and draw others into the path of life; but evil men set themselves to infect others, and engage them in the same pernicious courses: those who want learning to dispute and reason against truth and holiness, fail not to employ the little wit they have in ridiculing the most sacred things, like the scoffers predicted by the apostle Peter, 2 Ep. iii. 3; ungodly men, walking after their own lusts, who supply the want of argument by profane jests and raillery on the gospel, and those who seriously and heartily believe it: to which they often add the enticing baits of liberty, pleasure, and gain, which carry a mighty force, especially with younger persons, whose age makes them unsuspicious and inconsiderate. Hence, so many in their youth quite cast off all the bands of a pious education, whilst they guard not against the dangerous enticements of sinners, which is earnestly enjoined by the royal preacher, (Prov. i. 10,)

whose notorious defection from the worship of God is assigned unto this cause. 1 Kings xi. 5, 6.

Having thus represented the danger of not continuing in the things which have been learned of those who have instructed us in our holy religion; we proceed,—

II. To consider the preservative against this danger, laid down in the latter part of the text, "knowing (or considering) of whom thou hast learned them," *q. d.* "I apprehend thou wilt be strongly tempted to desert the doctrine and practice which have been delivered to thee; but if thou duly rememberest my character and conduct, how I have demeaned myself in my whole course, this will be an apt and suitable means to establish thy resolution of adhering to the things thou hast learned of me." In discoursing on this apostolic prescription, we shall,—State the proper efficacy of the preservative in its general nature, and—Lay down the particular characters of a teacher which most directly contribute unto the preserving from the danger mentioned. The former is necessary to prevent mistake, the latter to engage and animate our holy purpose of continuing in the truth and duty of the gospel. As to—

1. The stating and explaining the proper efficacy of what is prescribed to preserve us from the danger above related, it will be useful to observe the following particulars:—

(1.) That this is not to be understood, as if the bare authority of any ordinary teacher were a sufficient ground of obligation to continue in the things we have learned of him. This cannot be supposed, without a most dangerous altering the very nature of faith, which is always to be built on a divine testimony, as the apostle asserts, (Rom. x. 17,) "So then faith cometh by hearing, (or testimony) and hearing by the word of God." We ought not to give this deference to an angel from heaven, much less to the most excellent teachers, that their single authority should oblige us. We are commanded by our Lord, in this sense, to call no man our father upon earth, (Matt. xxiii. 9;) *i. e.* not to admit any one whomsoever (who acts in his own name) to have a dominion over our faith: only the supreme original Truth, the blessed God speaking by his Son, and those whom he commissioneth, is absolutely to be relied on. The Bereans are dignified with the title of noble, or high-born persons, because when the apostle Paul first preached to them, they searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Acts xvii. 11. Much more is it our duty to examine all that we learn of our ministers, by the same infallible rule, that we may not be the real disciples of any other master besides Him whose name is put on us in our baptism. "Our faith, and persevering obedience to the gospel, must not stand in the wisdom (or authority) of men, but in the power (and veracity) of God." 1 Cor. ii. 5.

(2.) This is to be understood in subordination to the internal effectual agency of the Divine Spirit, by whom, as the principal efficient, God doth stablish all believers in Christ, as the apostle asserts, 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. The sealing and impressing of our minds and hearts by the heavenly signet, is absolutely needful unto our continuing in the things we have learned. All our own efforts and endeavours will never preserve us from defection and drawing back unto perdition, without the powerful working of the Holy Spirit, who alone can fix our wavering minds, and furnish with strength to resist and overcome the most dangerous assaults that we can be exposed to: therefore the apostle, besides this seasonable counsel to Timothy, earnestly prayeth for him, last verse of this epistle, "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit;" as knowing that without the inward, vital presence of the Redeemer, all other helps will be insufficient and unsuccessful:—and we are obliged to add unto our use of the means here prescribed, fervent and continued supplication, for obtaining the mighty aid of the Divine Spirit, whom God hath graciously promised to give to those who ask him. Luke xi. 13. But,—

(3.) The efficacy of such a knowing and considering of him of whom we have learned, deriveth (in the usual method of Providence) from the native prevalent force of example. When the practice of a minister agreeth with his doctrine, this doth strongly recommend and impress the things that are taught by him; whereas a practice that is contrary to the most holy rules and instructions, shuts up and bars the hearts of those who observe this disagreement. Hence the blessed God, while he spake by prophets, called none to the prophetic office but holy persons, as we read, Luke i. 70; 2 Pet. i. 21. And it is well known that where the qualifications of officers in Christian churches are described, the principal stress is laid upon a holy and unblameable life, (1 Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 7;) on this design, that the example of those who teach others might powerfully convey their doctrine into the very hearts and consciences of men: and this consideration gives a sad occasion of observing how great a judgment and tremendous plague a vicious, ungodly ministry is to a people, who usually are much more influenced by the manners of their teachers, than by all the arguments and counsels which are proposed by them: one straying guide, who himself leads the way in a course of sin, draws many after him into the same destructive path. This provoked the terrible displeasure of God against the Jewish priests, against whom he draws a most severe charge, (Mal. ii. 8,) "But ye have departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law." Not the greatest learning, or moving eloquence, not the most accurate observing of external forms, can compensate for a defect as to holiness of conversation:—which leads to the—

(4th) And last reflection, *viz.* That the knowing and considering of the Christian practice of a teacher, is a most apt means to prevent or remove prejudices against the things which have been learned. Constant experience attests the truth of this. Many have acknowledged that it was their observing the justice and temperance, the patience and humility of those who suffered as evil-doers, which convinced them of the divine authority of the Christian doctrine. Therefore the glorious Founder of the Christian church did not only furnish the first publishers of the gospel with the prophetic spirit, and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, but replenished them with all the fruits of righteousness and universal goodness. They could make a just and safe appeal to all who had opportunity of observing, in the apostle's language, (1 Thess. ii. 10,) "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe." It is a very memorable passage which I have met with in a learned and judicious author,* "If the gospel (saith he) were now to be planted again, all the miracles in the world, I think, would not make it take, while our morals are as they are. A miracle may strike a little wonderment at first, but good morality, (*i.e.* a holy conversation) it sinks, it soaks to the heart: perverseness may say a miracle is from the devil; but who can say that good morality is from the devil?" This will be sufficient, I hope, to prevent mistake concerning the nature and kind of that efficacy which belongs to the means here directed to. I now proceed,—

2. To lay down the particular characters of a teacher, which most directly recommend and impress the things which have been learned of him; which will bring the discourse to the sorrowful circumstances of our present state; where (as I have before signified) I shall not attempt to draw a full description of him whose decease we justly lament, (which is always a considerable part of a funeral discourse;) but confine myself to some short memorials of him, which agree with my present design; which will be of far greater advantage to you, than to hear his just praises set forth by the tongues of men and of angels. This latter could only yield an evanid delight, which can no ways contribute to our chief interest, I mean the salvation of our souls; which, through divine assistance, will be furthered by the following account of those special characters which are most apt to engage unto a continuing in the things that we have learned: As,—

(1.) Knowledge in the mystery of Christ, a clear understanding of the counsel of God, that relates to the salvation of lost sinners. Without this, an honest mind may deceive others, because itself is liable to be deceived. This our apostle appeals unto, in the

* Garbutt.

first place, where he makes a description of himself, (*v.* 10,) "Thou hast fully known my doctrine," (*i. e.* how consonant to the Scriptures;) and puts the Ephesians in mind, that he was furnished with this sacred knowledge, (Eph. iii. 3,) by which he was rendered a wise master-builder in the house of God. I shall not flatter your late teacher, when I affirm that God had given him an uncommon skill in the word of righteousness, from whence he always drew all that he taught. He had peculiar advantages for understanding the oracles of God; a large fund of natural endowments, improved by superadded preparatives unto the study of the Scriptures; a rich treasure of human learning; (despised by none but the ignorant,) particularly, a thorough knowledge of pagan theology, by which he was enabled to descry the shortness and mistakes of human reason; which faculty he very well understood to use in subordination unto Christian faith, whose mysteries he was able to free from the objections of cavillers.

But that which most of all assisted his searching and right understanding of the Scriptures, was his very early and growing exemplary piety, which hath the promise of divine teaching and illumination. He took care to wash the vessel, that it might be receptive of divine communications. To all these, he added unwearied diligence, humility, and prayer, which was the delight and solace of his whole life. In such a course, he was safe from the illusions of fancy, and the specious errors that many great wits have been entangled with. His very excellent useful writings are a public testimony of this thing. Most justly might he use the apology made by the apostle Paul, when he was censured and reproached with being mad; "I am not mad, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." Acts xxvi. 25. This wisdom enabled him to confirm the truths of the gospel with proper and most convincing evidence, and represent the Christian scheme in its native unexceptionable comeliness. And should we not continue in the things we have learned of such a scribe, instructed unto the kingdom of heaven?

(2.) A second character, which has a peculiar aptness to recommend and impress divine things, is godly sincerity, with which all the first publishers of the gospel were adorned; and it did most eminently shine in the conduct of the apostle Paul, who takes frequent occasion to mention it, because some, either from ignorance or malice, taxed him with the want of it, as if he had acted according to worldly politics. 2 Cor. i. 12. "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." And he more largely insists on this qualification of those who have the office of instructing others, 1 Thess. ii. 3, 4,

5, 6. I know the imputation of insincerity, and hypocrisy, hath been very frequent against the most upright, excellent servants of God; thus when the accuser could not fasten a charge on the life of holy Job, he taxeth him with a mercenary and insincere disposition of mind, (Job i.) "Doth Job serve God for nought?"*

The wise counsel of God permits these unrighteous and very uneasy accusations, to exercise and demonstrate the reality and truth of his servants' love and devotedness to him: of which your deceased pastor gave most convictive evidences throughout the whole course of his ministry, by a noble and generous contemning of the world, and secular advantages, and a steady aiming at the honour of God, in all his conduct and ministrations; so that the character given of a learned and excellent defender of the Protestant cause, † doth truly belong to him, *viz.* Many excellencies there were in him, for which his memory remains; but above all was his crown, that he unfeignedly sought God's glory and the good of men's souls; and nothing doth so strongly recommend the things that we have learned as an assurance of the holy sincerity of the teacher, who can have no design to corrupt the word of God, for the sake of the greatest worldly advantage, (2 Cor. ii. 17,) "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ." We have known few in our age, to whom this solemn protestation of the apostle is more truly applicable than to him of whom you have learned; and what can justify the not continuing in the things taught by him?

(3.) Another character, which directly contributes to this purpose, is an ardent affection unto them who are taught. Nothing doth so certainly open and captivate the hearts of men as love, when it is apprehended. Very eminent were the apostle Paul and his fellow labourers for this disposition, (1 Thess. ii. 8,) "Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to impart to you not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, (that is, lives) because ye were dear to us." Nothing could rise higher than what we read, (Rom. ix. 3,) "For I could wish that myself were accursed for my brethren:" where it is not to be supposed that the apostle, a most sincere and fervent lover of Christ, could intend an eternal separation from Christ, which is all one

* F. Paul relateth that pope Adrian, (one of the honestest of his order) charged Luther and his followers with hypocrisy and acting against conscience, in which they were persuaded of the certain truth of the Romish tenets, but dissembled their sentiments,—in sua conscientia tenessero per indubitate l' opinioni Romane fingendo altrimente: E pero essere cosa facillima estinguere quella doterina, che non era fondata, salvo che sopra gl' interessi. Istoria del Concilio Tridentino. L. 1.—That pope hath not been singular in his censure, than which nothing could be more unjust.

† Chillingworth.

with damnation, but he only meant a bodily destruction for the sake of Christ, such as they suffered who were accursed or devoted unto death. Lev. xxvii. 29; Numb. xxi. 2, 3. I can truly profess, that I have not known any one who hath so nearly resembled this pattern as he whom we lament. How naturally, and with inward solicitude did he care for your estate! How often hath he ministered in this place, when his infirmities made such a service hazardous to his life! Which he did not count dear to himself, that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received for the saving of souls; for which he had the most tender regard, to the disregarding of all other and lower interests. We may justly apply to him the account given by this apostle of Epaphroditus, (Phil. ii. 30,) "For the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life." I might mention various instances of this most tender and fervent love to souls, as his impartial and faithful reproving of sin, without respect of persons; his easiness of access, his condescending to the lowest, and indeed becoming all things to all, that he might gain the more. But I must not omit that bright evidence of his divine love to men, I mean his readiness to assist all the necessitous and distressed that he had opportunity of doing good unto. Very few have been so governed as he by the apophthegm of our Lord, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts xx. 35. His charity was not a narrow spring, limited and confined to a small spot, but like an ocean sent forth refreshing streams without distinction. How often have the bowels of our persecuted brethren in a neighbouring kingdom, those generous confessors of the faith, been refreshed by his concern for them! When it is the reproachful character of our age, that all seek their own things, are intent on building their own houses, and raising their families, he was intent on building up living temples unto God, in all the ways which might contribute to the present and everlasting happiness of men. In this course he not only laid up for himself an undecaying treasure in heaven, but used the best method to entail a divine blessing on all his offspring. Surely the instructions, the counsels and exhortations, of such a one, ought never to be forgotten or slighted, when they could proceed from no other principle than a most unfeigned love to God, and affection to those among whom he laboured.

(4.) Another recommending character of a minister of the gospel, is Christian patience under afflictions and sufferings. When any suffer death for the truth of Christ, they gain the glorious titles of martyrs, or witnesses of Christ, whose doctrine they seal with their blood. The divine Providence hath taken care that the Christian faith should not want this evidence, both at its first planting, and at the time when it was rescued from anti-

christian corruptions. The apostle, in the preceding context, lays a great stress on this thing, (*v.* 10, 11,) "Thou hast fully known my long-suffering, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me,—what persecutions I endured," *i.e.* was not a mere compelled patient, but underwent them with becoming submission and fortitude. Indeed, God was not pleased to call forth his servant (lately withdrawn from us) unto the fiery trial, but he was furnished with patience, and fortitude of mind, able to encounter the most grievous sufferings. It is reasonable to conclude, that the afflicting hand of God did so long and variously chasten him, not so much for his own profit, as that he might be an eminent example of a truly Christian patience under very sharp afflictions. All the violent pains he endured, all the tedious hours he passed in his former, and last sickness, did not draw one impatient expression from him, but even then his adoring praises of God did instruct and confirm others. This was a seal which he affixed to the doctrine taught by him, which therefore we ought to continue in.

(5.) And a last character, which strongly recommends the things which we have been taught, is a final, joyful perseverance in the Christian course. It was on this design that the apostle giveth this account of himself, *ch.* iv. of this epistle, (*v.* 7,) "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." That very same language did agree to your excellent pastor. If he had fainted, or retracted at last, this must have much weakened the force of the things he taught, and your obligation to continue in them. But the divine grace enabled him to finish his course with uncommon joy. As he had always exercised an inviolable reverence for his own conscience, whose purity and peace he preferred above the most tempting advantages, so few ever more experienced a divine peace and serenity of mind at the nearest approaches of death: the sentence of it, when he received it in himself, did not dismay him: he needed no consolations from men; but as aged, holy Simeon, (Luke ii. 29,) only leave from his Lord to depart, and be admitted into his immediate presence, who hath now openly approved this good and faithful servant, and caused him to enter into his own joy.

Let us now, in the fear of God, lay these considerations to heart, that such excellent labours as we have enjoyed may not be lost, or turn into accusing witnesses against us another day. Our continuing in the things we have learned of him will be the best improvement of our unspeakable loss; and hereby shall we show the truest respect to his memory, that he may not only live in his offspring and useful writings, but in the truly Christian conversation of those who were related to him, or had opportunity of learning of him. In order to which, I shall subjoin a few persuasive considerations. As,—

1. It ought to have great weight in your minds, that the things you learned of him are the most important and uncontroverted truths of the gospel. He did not entertain you with doubtful disputations, or debates concerning external forms and modes of religion. His great soul could not descend to these little things. He hath expressed himself fully on this subject, in the dedication of Delighting in God, and preface to the Carnality of Religious Contention, which latter breathes so heavenly a charity and concern for the truly Christian interest, that a very eminent divine of the established church, did profess a willingness to lay down his own life, if such a state of things as is there described, might obtain among Christians. God is witness, and you with many others also, that his public ministrations were wholly taken up in opening and applying the principles of the oracles of God, (which he did with inimitable clearness and judiciousness) and in describing and pressing the unquestionable duties of men and Christians; such as love to God and our neighbour, repentance, faith, Christian vigilance, prayer, humility, and holy fear, with which our salvation is to be wrought out; still inculcating the absolute necessity of Christ's mediation, and the renewing, assisting influence of the Holy Spirit, which he showed to be consistent with, yea, obligatory unto our earnest endeavours after conversion and eternal life. Which last he largely pressed in many discourses on Rom. ii. 7. Very frequently he cautioned against those three dangerous rocks, (that prove fatal to many souls) *viz.* a sensual life, formality in religion, and unfruitfulness in the Christian profession. And is there any of all these, which you ought to be ashamed or unwilling to continue in? Can the reason or judgment of men frame a just objection against such a course? Nay, will not that man stand self-condemned, who, having once learned such important, undoubted truths, departs from them, through any temptations whatsoever? Add to this,—

2. The convincing demonstration he produced to satisfy reason and conscience. He was an avowed enemy to a blind implict faith, as also to a blind devotion. And none had a better skill to set in the best light the rational evidences, which confirm the principles and duties, both of natural and revealed religion; of which his published writings are a convincing witness; and his ordinary discourses, though clothed with familiar language, were not inferior as to strength of reasoning. So that it could not be charged on him that he preached to the fancy, or only aimed to move the affections; for he always first addressed to the judgment and conscience, so that if the gospel which was taught by him, remains hid to any who attended his ministry, "it is hid to those who are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not—because

by manifestation of the truth he commended, (or approved) himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God;" as the apostle speaks of himself, and his fellow labourers. 2 Cor. iv. 2—4. Again,—

3. Reflect on the very manner of his teaching, how earnest, how moving, how pungent, how persuasive was his language and expression! It might plainly be discerned that he spake from his very heart; not as pleasing the ear or imagination, (which his rare wit and eloquence enabled him to do) but as seeking the eternal happiness of souls. What is said concerning the famed tract of a Stoic philosopher,* that it was so moving and operative, that if any were not wrought on, he could only be reformed by the tribunals of the other world, (the author speaks according to the Platonic hypothesis†) is applicable in this case. It may almost be despaired, that those who refused and rejected the messages brought by him, but retained hard and obdurate hearts, should be persuaded to repentance and holiness by any other ministry.

4. It ought further to be considered, that the things learned of him were a most precious trust or *depositum* committed to those who have learned them. The original term ἐπιστώθης, which is translated, "hast been assured," in some Greek copies, by a small variation, is changed into a verb that signifieth "to commit or entrust;"‡ and this reading hath been preferred by some translations. This cannot be questioned, that divine truths and instructions have the character of a sacred trust, which is to be preserved with utmost care and fidelity. The very light of nature, the dictates of reason, discover this obligation: so that all agree in condemning the base injustice of him who betrays a trust, and is negligent in preserving that which is deposited with him; and the crime is judged the more heinous and inexcusable, by how much the *depositum*, the thing committed to another, is more precious and valuable. Who but a blinded infidel will deny the incomparable value of sacred and divine truths, which are of a heavenly original, and are a principal treasure committed to the church? How solemn a charge was given to Timothy, (1 Tim. vi. 20,) "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust." And it is repeated, (2 Tim. i. 14,) "That good thing which was committed to thee, keep;" *q. d.* give all diligence to guard the excellent *depositum* of the gospel, which thou hast been entrusted with. The same obligation is laid on us, who learned the same gospel, which must deserve a far more solicitous concern than any of the precious and admired treasures of this earth, which are guarded with greatest care. But if we continue not in the things we have learned, we are guilty of the worst injustice and unfaithfulness to others, and of greatest unkindness to

* Epictetus. † Simplicius. ‡ ἐπιστευθης, 22. V. Latin, French.

ourselves; for the things we have learned are not made our property, to do with them as we please; but we are obliged to transmit them to others of the succeeding age, that they who rise up after us, may enjoy the same blessed advantages. Ps. lxxviii. 5, 6. How great is the crime of a parent, who, having received a fair patrimony, or honour, doth waste the estate, and forfeit the honour, which he ought to transmit to those who are to succeed him! If those of this generation should betray the civil rights and liberties of the nation, which have been transmitted by their ancestors, and entail poverty and slavery on the succeeding generations; how unpardonable would such a conduct be judged! But the depriving of posterity of the light and efficacy of gospel truth, is an injury, an injustice unspeakably greater: because the former only affects the temporal and lesser interests of men, but the latter endangers their souls and eternal felicity: and who would not tremble at the thought of such guilt, if he really believes and expects a future judgment, in which a severe account must be given of this sacred talent that hath been entrusted with him? What answer shall he give in the day of accounts, who was very solicitous and diligent to guard every other trust, to transmit with great fidelity, houses, lands, trade, and such low matters, but was unfaithful to his principal charge, and (as much as lay in him) by not continuing in the things himself had learned, suffered the gospel to fail and be lost out of this world? In the—

5th and last place. Without continuing in the things you have learned of your deceased pastor, you cannot come where he now is. The present separation is matter of just sorrow, that we shall see his face (on earth) no more: but what must an everlasting separation be? To behold him shining as the sun in the kingdom of his Father, and yourselves cast into outer darkness: to see him crowned with never-fading life and glory, and yourselves shut up in the place of torment: what heart can bear the very thought? But nothing is more unquestionable, than that there is but one passage, one path to heaven, where he had never come, if he had not continued himself in the things which he first learned, and afterwards taught. Nay, if you should depart from the holy truth and duty in which you have been instructed by him, notwithstanding the tender love he bore to you, he must stand forth as a witness and accuser, to aggravate your guilt, and greaten your condemnation. I shall conclude with the advice of the apostle to his dearly beloved Philippians, applied to the present subject, (Phil. iv. 9,) "Those things which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in him, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

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The reader is respectfully requested to correct with his pen the following

ERRATA.

VOLUME I.

PAGE.

79 line 10, *read* laws of motion.
108 line 9, Heading—*read* things of this sort are *not* wanting.
240 line 35, before [1.] supply IX.
372 2 lines from foot, *read* terminates upon him; for him they worship, &c.
397 3 lines from foot, dele the second word, *the*.
472 line 24, *for* command, *read* commend.
480 line 8, *for* of, *read* on.
513 line 30, dele—*there*.

VOLUME II.

13 line 35, *read* that usual and obvious.
30 line 23, *for* proposition, *read* preposition.
60 and page 105, *for* Phædro, *read* Phædo.
67 16 lines from foot, *for* effective, *read* affective.
102 4 lines from foot, *for* model, *read* modal.
189 line 4, *read*, it is not necessary.
249 last line, *for* crime, *read* crying.
265 line 11, *for* morality, *read* mortality.
273 last line, *for* disposition, *read* supposition.
330 2 lines from foot, *read* not to every thing.
417 10 lines from foot, *read* we would have done.
608 Remove the inverted commas in line 13 to the end of line 4.

VOLUME III.

142 line 26, *read* he has a compassionate, &c.
189 last line but one, *read* an earnest well-willer, &c.
197 21 lines from foot, *read*, the many horrid, &c.
270 21 lines from foot, *for* after forsaking, *read* have forsaken.
311 line 15, *for* last her, *read* her last entertainment.
319 line 18, *for* may, *read* many.
336 21 lines from foot, *read* the ενφνια, &c.
338 11 lines from foot, *for* princess, *read* princes.

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